CHINA'S PEACEBUILDING APPROACH

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CAN CHINA THROUGH ITS EMERGENT INFLUENCE BECOME A KEY ACTOR IN SUPPORTING PEACE AND STABILITY IN CONFLICT AREAS?

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Abstract:
The purpose of this research is to examine China's emerging role in peacebuilding. With a fast-growing economy, China is becoming very influential and has increased its political leverage in conflict-affected countries. At the same time, China's foreign policy and strategy are evolving and Beijing is becoming more proactive in engaging and intervening on peacebuilding efforts. China has developed a unique peacebuilding approach, one that is based on economic growth as way to alleviate poverty and social unrest. China could contribute to bringing these alternative and complementary perspectives to the Peacebuilding debate and open this field to non-Western understandings. This research is going to examine China's approach, its origins in China's domestic situation and how China is exporting this model at the international level. Some of the aspects that will be analyse include: general aspects of the Chinese civilisation, philosophy and history, the domestic situation as well as on the ways that China handles its domestic conflicts in Xinjiang and Tibet; and some of the particularities and characteristics of Chinese foreign policy that shape the way it exports peacebuilding policies to the international arena. The intervention of China in the conflict of Kachin, Myanmar will illustrate how Chinese peacebuilding is evolving and moving away from its Westphalian principles of non-interference. China has thus become a key actor in supporting peace and stability and it should be part of any debate around peacebuilding moving forward based on shared interests in, and concern to promote peace and stability.

To my dearest friend Eva, for being so strong, kind and courageous
You will always be a true source of inspiration

Table of Contents

The supreme act of war is to subdue the enemy without fighting

Sun Tzu

Chapter One: Rising Powers and International Conflict Resolution

‘Let China sleep, for when she wakes, she will shake the world’
Napoleon

We are witnessing a profound change in the global order. Although the United States remains the lone superpower, the rest of the world is catching up. China is leading the rise of new emerging powers including the other BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) into the global order and they are beginning to steadily increase their international influence. This phenomenon has happened at the same time as the financial crisis in 2008-2009 which weakened the leadership of the US and the European Union leading to a demystification of the Western world in many non-Western countries. In the West, analysts and policy makers are grappling with what this rise of emerging powers (and China in particular), means for international relations and foreign policy. At the same time, Chinese policy makers are also coming to terms with this new found influence and the responsibilities that come with it.

For many Asian countries, the financial crisis confirmed the ‘wisdom of Asian countries’, in adopting a pragmatic rather than ideological approach to economic growth and development (Mahbubani, 2008). Many analysts now expect Asian economies, especially China and India, to provide greater global leadership to help steer the world through the emerging global challenges. But it is not only a different type of economic model that emerging countries are advocating for, they also want to use their influence to create a more inclusive and democratic international order. These countries share common experiences, existing as states who are ‘on the outside looking in’. These states hold an alternative vision of a multilateral system, that is strongly rules based so as to constrain the ability of stronger states to dominate the system as a whole (De Carvalho and De Coning, 2013). Although they might have divergent views on established norms, they are cautious and want to ensure that reforms are evolutionary in scope and pace. They are however, outspoken in the need to reform international institutions, including primarily the UN Security Council (bar China and Russia

who already have a permanent seat at the Security Council) so it can be replaced by a more globally representative system and processes.

The alterations and evolution of the 'new world order' are also reflected in international conflict resolution with Western actors no longer being the only actors when it comes to supporting global peace and stability. Emerging countries are becoming more proactive in shaping international systems and norms, including peacekeeping and peacebuilding agendas. Most of the emerging powers support either the liberal peace or a basic liberal international order, however, colonial history influences how the act, as they work to protect their sovereignty, gain status, and seek increased power to displace the Western centric influence in world politics. Rising powers are now bringing new schools of thought and divergent views on what had previously been a heavily Western-dominated field. There are for instance increasing numbers of Non-Western scholars that question the 'iconisation of democracy' and the 'ideological crusade' of Western countries after the Cold War, that insist that democracy can be exported to any society everywhere in the world, regardless of its stage of political development (Mahbubani, 2008). Another contentious issue between Western and emergent countries is around intervention. In general terms, most countries in the West have over the last decade increased their willingness to intervene in crisis zones, with force if necessary, to protect civilians and to promote democracy. Meanwhile, the rising powers take a more nuanced view, favouring instead the principles of sovereignty and self-determination. Most rising powers have demonstrated commitment to international peacekeeping (particularly if led by the United Nations), however; they are less enthusiastic about peacebuilding, because they perceive it to have been abused by the West as a tool to impose neoliberal values on weak states. For instance, the West is seen to use the UN and other international and regional organisations to increase the West's influence in the international system (Richmond & Tellidis, 2013). In terms of foreign aid, emerging donors have a different approach to Western donors as they frame their development goals as solidarity within the context of sovereignty, which creates a tension over peacebuilding and development between the supporters of the current liberal model (mainly Western nations) and some of the BRICS countries (notably, Russia, China and India). These emerging countries also agree on issues, particularly on the significance of the state as the main partner for aid, development, peacebuilding, and statebuilding.

Most of the new emerging powers share a desire to promote peace and stability. However, one of the challenges that the 'new world order' will have in the coming decades is that with the emergence of new actors there is the potential for a significant impact on the identity, legitimacy, capacity, coordination, and representation of the international community, and the organisations, institutions, agencies, and international non-governmental organisations that are part of it. This can however also create opportunities to enrich the foreign policy and conflict resolution field, by developing forums and mechanisms for constructive policy engagement and dialogue with new rising powers, which could represent an opportunity to engage based on shared interests in, and concern to promote peace and stability.

China's emergent role in conflict affected states

China is globally the most influential of these emerging actors, due primarily to its exceptional economic growth and the role its economy has played in the global system. Some equate the rise in China's share of the world product as a fundamental shift in the balance of global power, and without considering other dimensions of power this has led to a new international system where 'geo-economics' has replaced 'geopolitics' (S. Nye Jr., 2011). China has worked within the current international system to expand its economy and increase its visibility and status as a global political player, while avoiding actions that directly challenge US hegemony (Schweller & Pu, 2011). China has thus accommodated US hegemony on one hand but at the same time, Beijing is starting to challenge and contest the legitimacy of the US. Relying on existing institutionalised channels, China has sought to increase its political influence and prestige through active participation in, not confrontation with, the existing order. Some of the strategies that China has used include: promoting multilateralism, participating in and creating new international organisations, pursuing a proactive 'soft power' strategy and setting the agenda within international and regional organisations.

As the success of China's economy depends upon its access to overseas markets and resources, it has become a major investor and donor in many parts of the developing world, in Asia, Africa and now increasingly in Middle East and Latin America. This injection of resources has facilitated the creation of very close links to the governments of the countries that China partners with that used to depend on Western's assistance. This has created a situation in which China has considerably more political leverage with these countries and

in many cases, it has replaced traditional donors such as the US or the UK as the main partner of choice.

Many of the countries with close economic ties to China are affected or are recently emerging from violent conflict. The aid and infrastructure projects that China provides are becoming part of the conflict equation. On one hand, the investment and engagement may actually increase the risk of violent conflict, by reinforcing the patters of economic or political exclusion that gave rise to grievances, tensions, and violence in the first place. On the other hand, these projects can have substantial benefits in countries where infrastructure has been destroyed or left un-repaired during periods of conflict which could potentially support peace efforts. China's engagement has therefore altered the context in which international efforts to build peace and stability take place. It has also put China in a position where it can either support or undermine the peacebuilding influence of Western donors in conflict-affected states.

Although many analysts believe that China's interests are purely extractive and of economic nature, China's approach has developed and evolved as it has increasingly interacted with other powers and institutions in the international arena. Within China the terminology of 'peacebuilding' or 'post-conflict' does not really exists. According to Saferworld, security issues are divided from development or economic cooperation, which is mainly due to lack of understanding but also because security issues are seen as too political (Saferworld, 2012). However, China has developed a unique approach to what the western world understands as 'peacebuilding', an approach that is influenced by China's own history and experience as well as by its foreign policy strategy and domestic pressure.

The emergence of major new players like China also provides an opportunity to reassess and refresh policy approaches to conflict-affected states. The liberal peace is itself coming under criticism in Western circles and by non-western academics for being an essentially Western model. But although the liberal peacebuilding project has already been institutionalised as prevailing norms across the United Nations, there are increasingly more opportunities to revisit this model. As an emerging actor (and international donor) in the international system, China could potentially contribute to bringing alternative and complementary perspectives to the Peacebuilding debate that could open this field to non-Western understand-

ings. But in order to comprehend Beijing's approach there is a need for a more careful understanding of Chinese perspectives and principles which will help in understanding China's growing presence, influence and behaviour in conflict affected countries.

In order to contribute to this debate, this research is going to examine China's unique peacebuilding approach, its origins in China's domestic situation and how China is exporting this model at the international level. Some of the aspects that influence the Chinese peacebuilding approach will be analysed. These include: general aspects of the Chinese civilisation, philosophy and history, the domestic situation as well as on the ways that China handles its internal conflicts in Xinjiang and Tibet; and some of the particularities and characteristics of Chinese foreign policy that shape the way it exports peacebuilding policies to the international arena. This research will also illustrate how China has implemented its peacebuilding approach in dealing with its domestic ethnic conflict in the Western province in Xinjiang as well as how China has exported its approach outside its boundaries by actively intervening in the conflict of Kachin, Myanmar. These two case studies will illustrate some of the opportunities and challenges of the Chinese Peacebuilding approach. The example of Myanmar will also demonstrate how Chinese peacebuilding is evolving and is now being more proactive and is moving away from its Westphalian principles of non-interference and respecting state sovereignty.

China and Human Rights

In the past decades, China has demonstrated an increased 'openness' at the international level. However, at the domestic level, China remains an authoritarian state in which the Chinese Communist Party constitutionally is the paramount source of power. Organisations such as Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International have documented widespread human rights violations in the country, especially with regards to the rule of law and minorities' rights.

The evolution of China's approach to international human rights institutions and mechanisms run in parallel to its openness at the international level. Since its decision to open-up to the world economy and its institutions, China has shown progress with international human rights commitments in the last two decades (and more so since the new leadership assumed power in 2013). China has opted into the international human rights framework by

signing up to a wide range of human rights treaties. For instance, China signed and ratified a range of human rights treaties in the 1980s, including conventions on race discrimination, discrimination against women, apartheid, refugees and genocide. It also contributed to the drafting of the UN Convention Against Torture before becoming a party to this treaty in 1988 (Sceats & Breslin, 2012). In recent years it has also officially accepted the universality of human rights and it has established a dedicated EU-China Human Rights dialogue that aims at promoting human rights, and to foster the rule of law and civil society (European Union External Action Fact Sheet, 2016). China has also shown progress in areas such as building greater openness and democratisation, rights for internal migrants, access to social services for persons with disabilities, and the abolition of the one child policy in 2015 (Human Rights Watch, 2015).

Despite this progress, the country remains an authoritarian state. The country still limits fundamental rights, including freedom of expression, association, assembly, and religion, when their exercise is perceived to threaten one-party rule. China continues to view human rights in strongly aspirational rather than legal terms. It argues for priority to be placed on socio-economic rights and the right to development, and continues to insist that human rights should be implemented according to a country's national conditions (Sceats & Breslin, 2012). China has tended to invoke the right to sovereignty to deflect international scrutiny when human rights violations were committed. For instance, in the aftermath of the Tianan-men events in 1989, Chinese officials argued that "the use of force against the protesters was within its sovereignty and necessary to quell the rebellion, protect the interests of its people and ensure the development of the country and the success of the reform process" (in Sceats and Breslin, 2012, page 7). In the Chinese conception, therefore, sovereignty is presented as the cornerstone of or precondition for all rights. Other features of Chinese conception of human rights include the following:

1. Prioritisation of socio-economic rights: China has consistently promoted a hierarchy of rights in which social and economic rights are privileged over civil and political rights (Weiwei, 2012). In its 1991 white paper, the Chinese government asserted that 'the right to subsistence is the most important of all human rights, without which the other rights are out of the question' (in Sceats and Breslin, 2012 page 7).
2. Emphasis on development: According to the Chinese view, human rights are viewed as a 'noble goal' or a cause' that should be pursued by a state according to its level

of development rather than a set of binding international obligations. China has supported the idea of the so-called ‘Asian Values’ as well as promoting the idea of a ‘China Model of Democracy’ which seeks to support economic growth at the expense of civil and political rights (Subedi, 2015)

3. Focus on the rights of the many: China has promoted collective rights vested in people (or the state) such as the right to development and the right to self-determination in the struggle against colonialism as opposed to the individualistic orientation of the human rights framework. More recently, China and other states have suggested that the international human rights framework should be expanded to recognise the ‘right to international solidarity’ or the ‘right to peace’ (Sceats and Breslin, 2012)
4. Stability and peace as a precondition for human rights: China believes that public order, peace and stability is a paramount obligation of the state, even at the expense of fundamental human rights.

The issue of human rights in China remains a controversial and sensitive one. Human rights remains one of the priorities for Western states (despite significant lapses in the context of counter-terrorism policies and operations following the 9-11 attacks in the US) and for Western civil society organisations. The view of China as an authoritarian regime poses a challenge to China’s peacebuilding strategy as it questions the legitimacy of China as a peacebuilding actor. China’s top-down approach and its lack of public participation and promotion of civil society clash with some of the fundamental principles of the liberal peacebuilding model. However, although it is important to acknowledge China’s human rights concerns, China is becoming an increasingly important actor on the peacebuilding field and therefore is an actor that we need to consider and examine.

China is becoming a key player moving forward in the peacebuilding debate due to its distinct peacebuilding approach and because of its influence and leverage in conflict-affected states. Therefore, this thesis will analyse some of the commonalities and differences between the Western and the Chinese peacebuilding approach with the hope that it will contribute to any discussions on the review of the liberal peacebuilding model. The rise of China on the conflict resolution field should be seen as an opportunity. As stated by Mahbubani, “Western minds should reflect on the Chinese wisdom in translating the Western word ‘crisis’ by combining two Chinese characters, ‘danger’ and ‘opportunity’. Too many Western minds are looking at dangers, few are looking at opportunities” (Mahbubani, 2008, page 7). The

Chinese view on peacebuilding represent a new opportunity for the conflict resolution field and we should learn to work with it, rather than against it.

Methodology and current state of academic literature on China

This research on China's approach to peacebuilding is based on two methodologies: an analysis of available secondary sources and data; and through data collection obtained through open-ended and informal interviews conducted in several trips to Myanmar between 2013 and 2014.

Academic Secondary Research

Firstly, the analytical part of the research is based on analysis of secondary sources. This has been possible thanks to the new emergent interest in Chinese vision of world order which has facilitated the translation into English of work from Chinese academics and foreign policy analysts that was not previously available. Through the analysis of Chinese work it is possible to gather that there is an internal debate in China at the moment between those who want to accommodate Western power and those who think that China should be more proactive in its foreign policy. They include globalists who argue that it is the very fact that China is now more powerful that makes 'modesty' and 'prudence' even more important (Jisi). On the other side are those who argue that China must now pursue a more assertive foreign policy in which it helps to define the rules of foreign policy rather than simply following policies crafted in Washington and elsewhere (Yizhou). Although the increased translation has expanded the amount of literature available from Chinese scholars, still most of the studies on the China rise and its behaviour in the international system have been conducted by Western academics. This is a limitation as only a few Western academics (Callahan, Jacques, Kissinger, Pye amongst others) have critically studied China from an objective perspective, without a 'Western lens', trying to understand the roots and culture that influences Chinese behaviour without being biased towards Western models and principles. These scholars have conducted studies around the Asian and Chinese values and the differences in their culture that affect the role of the state and the relationship between the state and the population. For instance, Jacques has analysed how Chinese civilisation (including Confucianism) has a profound impacted on the relationship between the state and the population which differs from the Western conception. Pye has looked at the Asian tendency to place more value on the collective and be less sensitive than the west on the values

of individualism. Callahan has examined some Confucian concepts, such as the concept of *Tan Xia*, to explain how China sees the global world order and the impacts this view has on their foreign policy decisions. Therefore, the work from these academics helps understanding China's vision of the world order and its behaviour and interactions with international institutions and in conflict-affected countries. Similarly, most of the conflict resolution and peacebuilding literature has been developed by Western academics and universities which has led to many critiques by some western and non-western academics around the universality of these principles. For instance, in terms of peacebuilding models, western academics have not produced an alternative and distinct model to the liberal peacebuilding project. As it will be examined in Chapter two of this research, all alternative models and approaches are still not rooted on Western liberal values even if the liberal approach has been challenged by many Western academics. This lack of alternative and viable models has been interpreted by some academics as an attempt to universalise western concepts. For instance, Asian academics tend to criticise the 'Western imperialism of ideas' and the fact that these ideas tend to benefit only a small portion of the population and powerful lobbies as opposed to the global population (Mahbubani, 2008).

In terms of China's view on international conflict resolution, the majority of the research conducted so far has been on the rising role of China on supporting peacekeeping operations. In terms of China's view on international peacebuilding, as there is no overarching Chinese policy on conflict-affected states or for dealing with conflicts within China, policy and research focus on civil wars and state fragility is extremely limited. However, quite a lot of work has been done in the last few years by the organisation Saferworld in understanding the role that China plays in conflict affected countries. Other authors (Lei, Odgaard) have done recent studies on the views of China on coexistence and peacebuilding. It is likely that this field of research will expand in the next few years as China becomes more involved in peacebuilding activities. In terms of case studies, most academic work had previously focussed in Africa, and the growing influence China has in the continent through economic trade and foreign aid in conflict affected countries. Less research has been conducted on China's role in the conflict around its periphery. In the case of Myanmar, only a handful of practitioners and think tanks have done an analysis of the role of China in the Kachin conflict and on the overall Peace Process (ICG, Haacke, Sun). As one of the first examples of an intervention of China on a sovereign state, this research aims to fill this gap in the literature by proving the background and analysis of China's intervention in the conflict in Kachin.

Field Work in Myanmar

The second methodology used for this research has been through open-ended informal qualitative interviews in Myanmar, including interviews with Kachin displaced population in the Northern Shan state in Myanmar in several visits to the country during 2013 and 2014. This has been possible because of the work I do with Save the Children International (SC). During 2013 and 2014 I supported the SC office in Myanmar in developing and implementing a conflict sensitivity strategy across its programmes in the country. Through this work I was able to engage with different peacebuilding actors working in Yangon, such as local and international NGOs, different UN agencies, embassies and donors and I also attended peace coordination meetings and forums This gave me an opportunity to discuss formally and informally with people that were directly involved in the negotiations of the peace process who confirmed the discreet role that China was playing in the process. It also gave me the opportunity to discuss the peace process and the role of China with Myanmar people working in SC and in other organisations.

In total I conducted 29 interviews (24 in Yangon and 5 in Northern Shan - see Annex 1 for a list of people interviewed in Myanmar). I selected the interviewees on the basis of their engagement and knowledge of the Myanmar peace process and the Kachin conflict. However, working for an international organisation in a conflict area meant that I could not freely ask questions as it could jeopardise the impartiality of my role and of the organisation. For these reasons, the interviews had to be as informal as possible (in most cases they where conducted in cafes or small restaurants) and I could not take any notes as that could make people nervous and/or unwilling to speak freely. This meant that I had to write notes after the interviews and I could not collect any direct quotes.

Some of the interviewees were international staff that had worked in Myanmar for several years and that were very familiar with the particularities of the conflict, the government and the peace process. They provided a more objective view of the conflict and the interests of the parties involved. However, as I contacted them through Save the Children, the interviews and discussions with them were very informal and no notes or quotes were taken during the

discussions. The Myanmar interviewees were mainly Save the Children staff that I had developed a relationship of trust with or people that I had met through Save the Children and who trusted the organisation. Interviewing Myanmar people is quite challenging because Myanmar has been isolated for decades and until recently Myanmar people could not be seen discussing matters with foreigners. Although with the government's 'opening up policy' this is no longer the case, many people still find it difficult to openly discuss the conflict and peace process in Myanmar as well as anything that could be regarded as a criticism against the government. Also, because of the civil rights restrictions, lack of free independent media as well as a strict education system, there is limited critical analytical thinking education in Myanmar. This is especially acute in relation to discussions on ethnic conflict or the religious clashes with Muslim communities in Rakhine. Many people have a very biased and partisan view on these conflicts where tensions and intractable positions are fuelled by rumours.

All interviews with international staff in Yangon were conducted in English but for most of the Myanmar interviews (both in Yangon and in Northern Shan state) I had to use a translator. Ensuring reliable translation in Myanmar is a significant challenge. Although the official language is Burmese, there are at least seven recognised regional languages and most of the ethnic groups do not speak Burmese. For the reasons mentioned above, it is very difficult to find a translator that you can trust that will translate the literal conversation and not censor anything that s/he will disagree with (for not being in line with the government policy). Because of the sensitivity of the subject, even Save the Children translators could not always be used, as they will refuse to discuss these topics.

As part of the work of Save the Children in Myanmar I also led a conflict assessment in Kachin in March 2014 for SC. The conflict assessment was conducted on several levels. Firstly, an initial desk review of the conflict in Kachin was conducted through an analysis of available secondary data (academic journals, reports, news articles etc.). The aim of the desk review was to get understanding of the conflict history, causes, stakeholder analysis and conflict dynamics. Secondly, a context analysis was also conducted in order to understand the perceptions of the population on the conflict and their visions for peace, the stakeholders of the conflict as well to get an understanding of the conflict dynamics on the ground. This data was collected in two different ways: through a context analysis exercise with national Kachin and Myanmar staff members as part of a one day "Do no Harm" workshop in

which a total number of 30 staff members from SC and local Kachin organisations participate; and through interviews and a wider data collection exercise at the household level in ten internally displaced (IDP) camps. There were several limitations with this assessment. The main one was around language. Kachin people speak a different language than the Myanmar one which meant that everything had to be translated from English to Myanmar and then to Kachin. Also many Kachin people are reluctant to speak to Myanmar people as they think that they work in the government. Many also provide with an 'official line of answers' as opposed to their own opinions due to fear of being arrested by the Myanmar government. The sensitivity of the research topic meant that direct questions around the conflict and around the role of China could not be made. Furthermore, when respondents referred to China it was difficult to know if they were referring to official Chinese government authorities or Chinese individuals (mafias or other groups that operate near the border with Myanmar).

For all these reasons, this research does not include any direct quote or reference. The information gathered through the interviews is used to provide a sense of how the people both in Kachin and in the rest of Myanmar perceive the role of China in their country as well as their perceptions around the Myanmar peace process.

Chapter Overview

This research provides a discussion of China's peacebuilding approach, where it comes from and how it is being exported, by examining the characteristics of Chinese foreign policy and the evolving role of China in conflict-affected states. As an emergent power with increasing influence in many countries and with international institutions, this research will argue that China has become a key actor in supporting peace and stability and that therefore China should be part of any debate around peacebuilding moving forward. In order to illustrate all of these points, the research is divided in the following chapters:

Chapter 2 will examine the Liberal Peace theory, its definition and how the concept has evolved in the last decades. Although academics are defining alternative approaches to the liberal peacebuilding model based on some of the critiques it has received, none of these alternative approaches is completely detached from liberal values. As advocated by Cos-

mopolitan Conflict Resolution proponents, this chapter will argue that the peacebuilding definition could be enriched with Non-Western perspectives and approaches. As an emerging and influencing actor, China could contribute in defining these alternative models by bringing its own experience and definitions of peacebuilding

Chapter 3 will examine some of the characteristics of the Chinese Peacebuilding Approach. It will look at where this approach comes from, its origins in Confucian values and other unique characters of the Chinese civilisation. In order to discuss how China is applying this approach within its territory, this chapter will study some of social conflicts in China, paying more attention to the ethnic unrest in the Western province in Xinjiang as an example of how the Chinese government has applied the peacebuilding approach domestically. Although the Chinese peacebuilding approach has had some success in increasing standards of living in Xinjiang, this chapter will conclude that the approach has had limited positive outcomes as it has failed to address some of grievances of the local population and the root causes of the conflict.

Chapter 4 will examine some of the characteristics of the Chinese Foreign policy in order to understand how China has 'exported' its peacebuilding approach. China's unique approach to strategy and diplomacy, which is very distinct from the Western way, will be illustrated as well as the evolution of its foreign policy from a limited engagement to a more active position with regional and global structures as part of China's 'peaceful coexistence' strategic thinking. This chapter will conclude that through China's global peace engagement strategy, the country is exporting a distinct model for international conflict resolution which is demonstrated in how China supports international peacekeeping and peacebuilding missions. As an example of how China is implementing its global peace engagement strategy, a case study of China's engagement in Africa will be provided to illustrate this.

Using China's 'neighbourhood policy' as the framework, chapter 5 will discuss China's policies and interests in Myanmar that led to the intervention of China in the Kachin conflict. As this intervention has marked a turning point in Chinese foreign policy, this chapter will examine in more detail the characteristics of the Kachin conflict, China's interests and position on the conflict, and some of the dilemmas that China has faced in order to break its sacred principle of non-interference in internal affairs of other sovereign countries.

Finally, chapter 6 will provide an analysis of the main differences between the Liberal Peace and the Chinese Peacebuilding Approach. Based on the examples from Xinjiang and Myanmar, the chapter will examine some of the successes and challenges of the Chinese peacebuilding approach. Looking at some of the current opportunities through the Review of the UN peacebuilding architecture, the chapter will discuss how China could contribute to this debate in order to make peacebuilding a more inclusive and global concept. Lastly this research will conclude that because of its growing influence and political leverage, China can become an actor in supporting peace and stability in conflict affected countries and not recognising the impacts of China's engagement also undermines peacebuilding. Therefore, a shared concern in the West and China over stability in conflict-affected states provides a foundation for dialogue about peacebuilding.

Chapter Two: Liberal Peace in Crisis?

‘Human nature is evil and goodness is caused by intentional activity’
Xun Zi

Violent conflicts around the world have become significantly more complex over the first decade and a half of this century. After declining for much of the late 1990s and early 2000s major civil wars almost tripled from four in 2007 to eleven in 2014 (Source: United Nations, 2015). The characteristics of violent conflict have changed in the last years and the security landscapes in many regions, such as the Middle East, have been radically transformed with the upsurge of internal and regional conflicts. There are new types of armed actors, there is an increased growth in violent extremism, and conflicts are becoming more intractable. Some of the key elements that have driven these transformations include chronic political instability in fragile countries, persistent social volatility and conflict, the proliferation of non-state armed groups and transnational actors, disputes over land and natural resources, proliferation of small arms and light weapons, weak state systems, and recurring cycles of violent competition over the state or markets. State capacities and functions are challenged in many regions of the world as there is an increased number of states that have limited capacity to provide people with security, welfare and representation. For instance, in some parts of Central and South America, states have lost control of power, authority, and territory to organised criminal actors; and in some parts of the Middle East and Africa this has happened to transnational armed groups. In some regions, territorial control by states is contested, in many cases violently by militia, terrorists or other armed groups.

The transformation of the conflict landscape is also mirrored by a transfiguration in the international peacebuilding arena. There is a growing number of emerging actors that play important roles in peacebuilding, such as state, non-state or sub-national actors. Many of these actors engage with peacebuilding outside existing institutional frameworks and are using different labels to advance their efforts and interests in a specific context which is leading to confusion over power authorities (White Paper on Peacebuilding). Also, emerging non-Western countries such as China, Brazil or Russia have an increased influence in international institutions and are being increasingly proactive in peacebuilding agendas. This

context presents a challenge to the operating principles of international governmental organisations as well as to the established peacebuilding architecture that was primarily based on western priorities and resolutions.

In order to understand the journey of peacebuilding until the present day, this chapter will examine the definition of peacebuilding and its progress over the last three decades. It will illustrate the different phases and main characteristics of the Liberal Peace theory and its evolution from supporting statebuilding interventions towards a more locally-owned 'peacebuilding from below process'. The Liberal peacebuilding project has received many critiques, some of which have been incorporated into the new approaches and definitions. However, Western academics have failed to develop a concept that it is not completely detached from Western Liberal values. The chapter will conclude that if peacebuilding wants to be a universal concept, the debate needs to incorporate the views and approaches of non-Western academics.

What is Peacebuilding?

Peacebuilding is a very broad concept that has evolved over time. The term was firstly introduced by Johan Galtung in 1975. He defined peacebuilding as achieving positive and sustainable peace by creating structures, systems and institutions of peace based on justice, equity and cooperation that will address the root causes of conflict and support local capacity for peace management and conflict resolution (United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office). Galtung's work emphasised a bottom-up approach that decentralised social and economic structures, amounting to a call for a societal shift from structures of coercion and violence to a culture of peace. Building from this definition, American sociologist John Paul Lederach proposed a different concept of peacebuilding as one in which the aim is to engage grassroots, local, NGO, international and other actors to create a sustainable peace process. Lederach defines peacebuilding as a comprehensive concept that encompasses, generates and sustains the full array of processes, approaches, and stages needed to transform conflict toward more sustainable, peaceful relationships (Lederach, 1997). The main different with Galtung's definition is that Lederach does not advocate the same degree of structural change as Galtung.

The evolution of peacebuilding began with the increase in United Nations-mediated peace processes in the early 1990s. The United Nations peacebuilding agenda was developed in

response to a perceived gap between war and peace. In the aftermath of wars, the international community realised that winning the peace had proved vastly more difficult than winning the war. In light of this, building sustainable peace through post-conflict reconciliation and institutional reform became a main agenda item for the UN. Peacebuilding then expanded to include many different dimensions, such as disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration and rebuilding governmental, economic and civil society institutions. The concept was popularised in the international community through the United Nations Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali's 1992 report 'An Agenda for Peace'. The report defined post-conflict peacebuilding as an 'action to identify and support structures which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict' (United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office). The tendency for countries to fall back into conflict was seen in large part as a consequence of states lacking the capacity or will to protect their populations. In this logic a more full-fledged intervention became necessary to prevent fragile states from constituting a security threat to their own populations (Philipsen, 2014). The particular tasks that this might entail include 'driving the previously warring parties and the restoration of order, the custody and possible destruction of weapons, repatriating refugees, advisory and training support for security personnel, monitoring elections, advancing efforts to protect human rights, reforming or strengthening governmental institutions and promoting formal and informal processes of political participation' (Paris, 2004). However, the UN Agenda for Peace definition mainly focussed on the democratic rebuilding of the states after an armed conflict which provided a narrower focus than Galtung's original definition.

With the emergent role of the United Nations as well as the international community in peacebuilding processes, different notions of peacebuilding emerged, reflecting both successive experience in peace operations and evolving scholarly ideas as they reacted to one another and perceived 'lessons learned' of international interventions. Three phases in the evolution of peacebuilding can be identified:

1. Peacebuilding as Multidimensional Peacekeeping in the early 1990s.
2. Liberal Peacebuilding and Statebuilding in the 2000s
3. Nationally-owned peacebuilding or peacebuilding from below since 2000 onwards

The next section is going to examine the evolution of peacebuilding approaches during these phases as well as some of the critiques.

Peacebuilding as Multidimensional Peacekeeping (1989-99)

In the early 1990s, the successful mediation and peaceful facilitation of several long-running civil wars in Namibia, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Cambodia, Mozambique and Guatemala, popularised models for peacemaking. The international community began to look at 'peace implementation' which encompassed international monitoring and verification of peace agreements. Within the UN Secretariat, peacebuilding activities largely fell under the term 'multi-dimensional peacekeeping', with civilian requirements expanding rapidly to include monitoring and advising on political, human rights, civil affairs, electoral, disarmament and demobilisation, humanitarian assistance and policing tasks (Call, 2015). For instance, the UN was called to monitor the conduct of local police in Namibia, while preparing the country for its first democratic election and assisting in the preparation of the new national constitution. These functions went well beyond the constraints that had traditionally been imposed on peacekeepers, including the prohibition on involvement in the domestic affairs of the host countries (Paris, 2004). But more importantly, these interventions started to reflect a different approach to conflict management and security as they illustrated the idea that maintaining peace in post-conflict societies required a multi-faceted approach, with attention to a wide range of social, economic and institutional needs. The term 'Peace operations' emerged as a generic label for the wide variety of missions that the UN began to conduct at this time, since many of these interventions no longer seemed to fit the traditional peacekeeping approach.

Peacebuilding as Statebuilding & Liberal Peacebuilding (1999-2005)

At the 2005 World Summit, the United Nations began creating a peacebuilding architecture to coordinate the United Nation's Peacebuilding Efforts that produced three organisations: the UN Peacebuilding Commission, the UN Peacebuilding Fund; and the UN Peacebuilding Support Office. During this period, all of the UN peace operations pursued the same general strategy for promoting stable and lasting peace: democratisation and marketisation. The typical formula of peacebuilding included, among others, promoting civil and political rights, preparing and administering democratic elections, drafting national constitutions, training police and justice officials, promoting the development of independent 'civil society' organisations, encouraging the development of free-market economies, and stimulating the growth

of private enterprise while reducing the state's role in the economy (Paris, 2004). Because of the scope and breadth of these peacebuilding activities, and the emphasis on building institutions based upon market economies and democracy, contemporary peacebuilding began to be labelled as 'liberal peacebuilding'. According to Duffield the idea of liberal peace combined 'liberal' (as in contemporary liberal economic and political tenets) with 'peace' (the policy predilection towards conflict resolution and societal reconstruction). He described liberal power as one based on the management and regulation of economic, political and social processes (Duffield, 2008).

Liberal peacebuilding was based on the post-Cold War conviction that political and economic liberalism offered a key to solving a broad range of social, political and economic challenges: from internal and international violence to poverty, famine, corruption, and even environmental destruction. The core argument in favour of liberalisation is that it promotes peace: countries that govern themselves in a truly democratic fashion do not go to war with one another. In the 'Agenda for Democratisation', Boutros-Ghali concluded that the promotion of democracy was essential because 'peace, development and democracy are inextricably linked' (Boutros-Ghali, 1996). Rule of law also become a priority in external interventions aimed at the reestablishment of order and the promotion of peace in war-torn countries and societies. The argument behind this was that rule of law could contribute to the ends of peacebuilding by helping to establish stability and security in post-war or unstable societies, and prevent the emergence or re-emergence of violent conflict (Almeida & Krever, 2012). During this period, the United Nations started to use the liberal peace narrative in its definition of peacebuilding. In 2008, the UN defined peacebuilding as involving a wide range of activities that aim at reducing the risk of conflict by strengthening national capacities at all levels and addressing structural causes of violent conflict in a comprehensive manner, seeking to enhance the capacity of the State to effectively and legitimately carry out its core functions (UN Peacekeeping operations: Principles and Guidelines, 2008). For the UN, the achievement of a sustainable peace requires progress in at least four critical areas:

- Restoring the State's ability to provide security and maintain public order;
- Strengthening the rule of law and respect for human rights;
- Supporting the emergence of legitimate political institutions and participatory processes;
- Promoting social and economic recovery and development, including the safe return or resettlement of internally displaced persons and refugees uprooted by conflict.

The liberal peacebuilding project therefore reflected the major change after the Cold War and the perceived triumph of liberal market democracy over Communism when Francis Fukuyama proclaimed the universalisation of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human governance; the only model of governance with any broad legitimacy and ideological appeal in the world (Paris, 2004)

Statebuilding as Peacebuilding

Due to the unprecedented executive authority of the United Nations in Kosovo and East Timor in 1999, the state assumed a more salient role in the theory and practice of peacebuilding as the UN became the *de facto* state in these countries, revealing a need for new international civilian capacity to administer state functions during transitional periods. The experiences in Kosovo and East Timor opened a debate that was hastened by the US-led war in Afghanistan in 2001 and the US invasion and occupation of Iraq in 2003-04. Peacebuilding took a turn to a strong focus on constructing and strengthening legitimate governmental institutions in countries emerging from civil war. The UN abandoned the value of neutrality and took on the responsibility to rebuild the administration and institutions in collapsed states. During this period, statebuilding became a major component of peacebuilding. The statebuilding model implemented replicated the institutions, norms, political, social, and economic systems of the Western system which also contributed to the ‘‘liberal peacebuilding project’ definition.

However, for some analysts, peacebuilding and statebuilding were not necessarily comfortably matched and that there was an ‘uncomfortable compromise’ of liberal peacebuilding. For Richmond and Franks, the objectives of statebuilding differ to those of peacebuilding. While the statebuilding agenda is focussed on political, economic, and security architecture, and determines its outcomes as a neoliberal, sovereign and territorial state; peacebuilding focuses on the needs and rights of individuals, without placing sovereignty, territory and the institutions of the state ahead of the population needs (Richmond and Franks, 2011). The distinct agendas between peacebuilding and statebuilding can also be seen in the relationship between top-down approaches targeting the state, and bottom-up approaches targeting civil society. The promotion and nurturing of civil society was widely perceived to be the most effective means of controlling state power, holding rulers accountable to their citizens

and promoting peace. Some analysts believe that in order to achieve sustainable peace the democratic relation between an accountable state and an active civil society is key (Philipsen, 2014). However, bottom-up approaches tended to be de-prioritised in the statebuilding agenda. The accountability of the interveners during statebuilding interventions was also questioned. In his book 'Empire in Denial', Chandler criticised the statebuilding approach for not being accountable and responsible. He argued that even when power has been exercised in a traditional way (such as an invasion or occupation as the US in Iraq and Afghanistan), Western institutions have 'denied' power and responsibility. And unlike direct forms of colonial rule, these new types of 'Empires' have exercised power without drawback of overt or transparent mechanisms of political accountability, increasingly undermining the traditional rights of state sovereignty, those of self-government and non-intervention (Chandler, 2006a).

Critiques of the Liberal Peace Project

Using the division developed by Chandler (Chandler, 2011), the critiques of the liberal peacebuilding model can be grouped into two: the 'power-based critique' and the 'ideas-based critique'. The main difference between the two is that while the 'ideas-based' critique tend to seek to defend and legitimate regulatory external interventions, the 'power-based' critique tend to challenge and oppose these frameworks as the projection of Western power and interest.

Power-based critique

This critique argues that the liberal peacebuilding project reflects the hegemonic values and the political, economic and geo-strategic needs of Western states. Critiques focus on the role played by the interests of Western powers using interventions as an excuse to export Western ideologies to countries in which they are inappropriate (Chandler, 2011 & Ashdown, 2008). This critics of the liberal peace do not argue that they are anti-liberal. On the contrary, they argue that liberalism, as projected in liberal peace frameworks, has to take into account the non-liberal context in which the intervention takes place. Therefore, the founding assumptions of the liberal peace are the problem: attempts to universalise Western models in non-liberal contexts which will merely reproduce, and maybe even exacerbate, the problems

of conflict and instability. For instance, in the aftermath of the US invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan, the intervention was criticised as being used for imperialist objectives (and not for peaceful ones) as the US imposed elections, constitutional processes, market-oriented economic adjustment and institution-building. The main anti-intervention critique came from Herbst (2003) and Weinstein (2005) who objected to liberal interventionism and suggested that conflicts should sometimes be allowed to burn themselves out, and that large-scale impartial interventions (even after a ceasefire agreement) risks locking in conditions that are not sustainable or compatible with long term peace (in Ramsbotham et al, 2011). In other words, wars ending in military victory may produce longer-lasting peace than those ending in negotiated settlement. However, this approach involves huge risks and costs. For instance, winners might decimate the losers (as in the case of Sri Lanka) or some wars might continue for years or decades without resolution (as in the case of the current conflict Syria).

Also analysts questioned the sustainability of the interventions. According to Chandler, the solution to the complexity of the non-liberal state and society in both Iraq and Afghanistan was the internationalisation of the mechanisms of government, removing substantive autonomy rather than promoting it and not transforming institutions as part of the liberal peace (Chandler 2011). This was also exacerbated by the fact that although the roles played by non-Western regional organisations such as the African Union, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations or the Organisation of American States were considerable, most international conflict resolution procedures were led by either major international organisations or Western countries in this period. Richmond and Franks (2011) also add that as the liberal peace is a discourse, framework and structure with a specific ontology and methodology, it operates both at a social and a state level with significant resources. But they argue that the allocation of those resources, the power to do so, and their control, has become the new site of power and domination in post-conflict societies (Richmond and Franks, 2011). This power imbalance has created relations of dependency between the external intervention and the local institutions. This has created situations where local institutions have been undermined and peacebuilders have exercised such expansive powers that they could effectively suppressed genuine political participation and locally driven reforms.

Ideas-Based Critique

This critique is based on the grounding universalism assumptions of the liberal policy discourse itself, rather than merely as a critique of the forms of its implementation. These critiques advocate less liberal frameworks of intervention, with less attention to the reconstruction of sovereign states, democracy and free market and more focus on the problem of Western interventionist 'ideas' and 'values' rather than on interests or power relations (Chandler, 2011). They critique the belief that any society anywhere in the world at any stage of social and economic development could be immediately transformed overnight into a liberal democracy. For instance, Krasner argues that sovereignty is problematic for many states because they lack the capacity for good governance and require an external regulatory framework in order to guarantee human rights and rule of law (in Chandler, 2011). Paris advocates for 'Institutionalisation before Liberalisation' (Paris, 2004) in order to establish the regulatory framework necessary to ensure that post-conflict societies can gradually and safely move towards liberal models of democracy. He claims that in post-conflict situations, economic and political liberalisation, while ultimately desirable, should be delayed until after the establishment of functioning governance institutions, such as the rule of law. Some analysts even argued that not always being a democratic state necessarily means that the state is peaceful and that therefore it will prevent war. In her book, World on Fire, Amy Chua argues that there are cases in which democratisations released long-suppressed hatreds against a prosperous ethnic minority (such the ethnic cleansing of Croats in parts of the former Yugoslavia, the attacks of the Chinese minority in Indonesia, and the Tutsi slaughter in Rwanda). She argues that in the many countries that have pervasive poverty and a market-dominant minority, democracy and markets can proceed only in deep tension with each other. In such conditions, the combined pursuit of free markets and democratisation has repeatedly catalysed ethnic conflict in highly predictable ways (Chua, 2002). Other shortcomings of the liberal peacebuilding project highlighted by Paris include: inadequate attention to domestic institutional conditions for successful democratisation and marketisation; poor strategic coordination among the various international actors involved in these missions; insufficient commitment to resources; limited knowledge of distinctive local conditions; insufficient local ownership over the strategic direction and daily activities of these operations; and continued conceptual challenges in defining the conditions for success and strategies for bringing operations to an effective close (Paris, 2011). Campbell also raises the issue of accountability of peacebuilding organisations. He argues that peacebuilding organisations should be accountable to the beneficiaries they claim to serve as opposed to actors that are external to the state in which they intervene (Campbell, 2011).

Nationally-owned Peacebuilding or Peacebuilding from below (2009-2014)

In the late 2000s, new trends in peacebuilding began to produce different approaches as new voices from the global South demanded more nationally-owned processes. Many new actors based in emerging economies became more confident to assert their interests in different forums and contexts, including with respect to peacebuilding. This change led to different perspectives about 'what' peacebuilding might be at international or local levels, as well as about the 'how', 'why', and 'who' in peacebuilding. The troubled experiences of Afghanistan and Iraq called into question even temporary assumptions of executive state power by international military or civilian missions, and challenged top-down approaches inspired by liberalism and externally-driven models and capacities. The dependence on 'Western support' to implement the peacebuilding agenda, its linkages to neoliberalism, its focus on territorial sovereignty and statehood, and its inability to contextually address the needs of local populations were the target of much criticism. At the same time there was an increasing self-confidence amongst many state and societal actors that started challenging the approaches of outsiders attempting to control peacebuilding dynamics on the ground arguing that there was a disconnection between peacebuilding at the grassroots level and action by international organisations and bilateral donors (White Paper on Peacebuilding, Geneva Peacebuilding Platform, 2015).

The peacebuilding from below approach was created based on the critiques that highlighted the need to develop a higher degree of understanding of national and local institutions and build cooperative relationships that enable national actors to sustain the desired results in order for liberal peacebuilders to achieve their transformative goals (Campbell, 2011). Similarly, Hoffman describes 'genuine peacebuilding' as an 'abandonment of uniform and bureaucratically imposed structures, a far greater sensitivity and nuanced understanding of local conditions, and a readiness to encompass the variety of voices, often conflicting, that must participate if there is to be in inclusive collective reasoning about the peacebuilding project '(Hoffman, 2009 in Ramsbotham et al, 2011). In order to move from the previous top-down liberal peacebuilding/statebuilding approach towards a participatory bottom-up approach, Hofman describes the process as follows:

> "As a first step it would mean a move away from the paternalistic, technocratic one-size-fits-all approach to peacebuilding. Shifting to a more bottom up, society building approach, there is a need to engage creatively and dynamically with local dynamics without falling into the trap of 'romanticising the local' or entrenching existing structures of violence and/or inequality. A peace that is built on the ground needs to reflect the interests, needs and aspirations of local populations rather than those of the international peacebuilding community. If we start by asking what 'we' want to achieve then we are starting with the wrong question" (in Ramsbotham et al, 2011, page 227)

In order to address the lack of contextualisation and ownership of the interventions, many scholars (Duffield, 2007, Richmond 2007 & Pugh, 2005 in Paris, 2011b) started to look at how the liberal peacebuilding theory could evolve and take into account these issues. Still rooted on the liberal peacebuilding approach and principles, different approaches for the same model were developed:

Emancipatory Peacebuilding

The concept of 'Emancipatory Peacebuilding' was brought up in order to achieve a broad consensus among the target population by ensuring participation of local actors and more engagement with local populations (Pugh, 2005 in Paris, 2011b). However, this concept was criticised for not being specific enough as it did not provide a clear alternative approach to liberal peacebuilding, with some proponents not even viewing it as distinct model from liberal peacebuilding (Paris, 2011b). For instance, Richmond argues that emancipatory peacebuilding is not distinct enough from liberal peacebuilding as emancipation is integral to liberalism but current approaches do not put enough weight and emphasis on bottom up approaches. Moreover, both Richmond and Paris agree that liberal peacebuilding cannot succeed unless it achieves a broad consensus among its target population which might in turn be connected to the idea of emancipation (Richmond, 2007 & Paris, 2011b).

Local Liberal hybrid form

This approach considers that in order to make peace sustainable there needs to be greater cultural sensitivity and local ownership and a focus on the agency, rights, needs and welfare of the communities and individuals concerned rather than on overly securitised institutions

and states. According to Richmond, a local-liberal hybrid form of peace constitutes a post-liberal forms of peace and represents the interface between the local and the liberal and rather than imposing the liberal normative system on the local. As such, it should facilitate a new mediation between the two in each context (Richmond, 2011b). This model argues that sustainable peacemaking processes must be based not merely on the peace agreements made by elites, but rather, on the empowerment of communities torn apart by war. It therefore recognises the importance of local actors, local knowledge and wisdom, the non-governmental sector and citizen-based peacebuilding initiatives. It is also designed to capitalise on the core of the original conflict resolution and peacebuilding agendas, addressing needs and root causes, connecting the new liberal state or polity with older, locally recognisable and contextual, customary, political, social and economic traditions, and engaging with grass roots and the most marginalised members of post-conflict polities. This model also recognises that the interaction and mediation between the local and the international liberal aspects could result in cooperation, as it is as likely that the local will shape the liberal in each context as the liberal will shape the local (Ramsbotham et al, 2011 & Richmond, 2011b).

Mac Ginty also agrees that hybridity is a way of capturing the interaction between internal and external actors in contexts experiencing internationally sponsored peacebuilding and statebuilding operations and that is in tune with the conflict transformation literature that encourages us to examine relationships between actors, and questions the fixity of identities and world views (Mac Ginty, 2011). For Mac Ginty, the purpose of hybridity is to propose a more accurate view of the dynamic and multifarious nature of actors, ideas and practices that contribute to peacebuilding which involves local actors pushing back against international peace interventions and creating and maintaining their own space for political, economic and cultural interaction which has largely been removed from the agendas and resource streams created by liberal peace actors. He argues that traditional and indigenous methods tend to focus on ‘consensus decision making’, a restoration of the human/resource balance and compensations designed to ensure reciprocal and ongoing harmonious relations between groups which has the potential to achieve grass root legitimacy of peacebuilding interventions. However, he argues that even if hybridity is a way to bring the local back to the studies it is important not to romantise all local, traditional and customary things or the sense that the most effective and sustainable ways of finding peace can only be known and experience by indigenous peoples unaided by external interference Hybrid Peace as

traditional practices might reinforce the authority of existing power holders and to impose social conformity. Nevertheless, without clear alternatives to the liberal project, Mac Ginty believes that hybridity remains the most sensible foundation for post-conflict peacebuilding (Mac Ginty, 2011)

Support of National Dialogue and Peace Processes

National dialogue processes offer domestic frameworks for negotiating political settlements and facilitating constitutional reform, which external partners can support. Domestic actors lead the process, decision-making and means of implementation, and national dialogues bring together major policymakers and social stakeholders. Dialogue structures have not only provided new constitutional frameworks to address the root causes of conflict or constitutional failures, but have also served a much broader function: to provide spaces and instruments for reconciliation, developing joint visions between former enemies, and slowly evolving an understanding of the needs, perceptions and perspectives of the "other" (Siebert, 2014).

One function of a peace process can be understood as providing a structure to accommodate diverse or competing sources of, or claimants to, legitimacy in conflict-affected states and societies, and to cultivate broad consent on a satisfactory way forward for peace. The legitimacy of a peace process can be understood as the extent of popular support both for the process itself – its specific initiatives and components – and for its outcomes, including a peace deal or political settlement. Ramsbotham and Wennmann argue that applying 'legitimacy lens' in the design and implementation to efforts in building peace and transform government can be useful to enhance the prospects of sustainable peace. This can be done by prioritising the following (Ramsbotham and Wennmann, 2014):

Context: recognising that legitimacy is specific to the circumstances and constituencies of a given conflict. Context-sensitive peacebuilding stresses domestic ownership of the peace agenda and architecture.
Consent: acknowledging that legitimacy is contested in situations of violent conflict. A consensual peace process that can accommodate representation of multiple sources of legitimacy is more likely to lead to a consensual outcome that people will commit to.

Change: understanding that peace initiatives are best seen as key components in ongoing processes of transition, rather than as ends in themselves. In states and societies affected by violent conflict, peace processes can help facilitate progress towards more consensual systems of governance as the basis for promoting sustainable peace.

However, the report of the UN peacebuilding architecture review in 2015 (United Nations, 2015), analyses some of the complexities with supporting national peace processes in the current evolving conflict environment. The report argues that from the perspective of sustaining peace the old model of ending a conflict through a comprehensive peace accord between previous fairly well identified enemies has often had to give way to less tidy arrangements with less clearly defined protagonists. This is turn greatly increases the risk of relapse. Peace agreements are often hurried and the processes frequently influenced or driven by outside mediation groups with varying levels of international legitimacy. Much as peace cannot be imposed from outside, the report argues that peace cannot simply be imposed by domestic elites or authoritarian governments on fractious populations that lack even minimal trust in their leaderships or each other and that in divided post-conflict societies such an approach risks perpetuating exclusion (United Nations, 2015).

Is the Liberal Peace Project in Crisis? Alternative models

There has been many debates and discussions as to whether the liberal peacebuilding project is in crisis or not. Regardless of the outcomes of those discussions, data has proved that the liberal peace model still remains relevant today in order to analyse contemporary conflicts and peace processes. In 2014, Madhav, Sung Yong & Mac Ginty conducted and study which they analysed the data from the Peace Accord Matrix (PAM) project which compares and contrasts the features of comprehensive peace agreements signed since 1989. The PAM dataset identified 34 comprehensive peace accords after intra-state conflict in 31 countries, with 25 peace accords (74 per cent) involving external mediation support either by international organisations or international/regional players. By looking at five liberal policy areas (promotion of democracy, rule of law, and emphasis on human rights, security sector reform, government reforms), the PAM data prove that the liberal peace does indeed exist, at least in terms of the inclusion of liberal goals in the text of peace accords. All five elements were found in over 50 per cent of peace accords, with some elements (especially security sector reform and electoral and political reform) found in a much higher percentage.

The study concluded that liberal peacebuilding is still a dominant form of internationally supported peacemaking, and argued that the influence of liberalism has done much to shape contemporary peacebuilding operations (Madhav et al, 2014)

The debate and evolution around the definition, characteristics and scope of peacebuilding will continue to evolve, and this debate would continue to consider the views from different actors. As stated in to Ramsbotham et al 'peacebuilding should reflect and be the product of a negotiated discursive practice and not the outcome of a technically defined and externally imposed blueprint' (Ramsbotham et al, 2011). Nevertheless, as examined before, there has not been an alternative peacebuilding model that is not rooted in western liberal principles. All the alternative approaches are based on the liberal model and principles and many analysts believe that the liberal peacebuilding model should not be replace, rather, it should be revised under the same principles. For instance, for scholars like Paris, the solution is not to replace liberal peacebuilding but to reform existing approaches within a broadly liberal framework (Paris, 2011b). Richmond and Franks also argue that there is a need to develop a praxis of post-liberal peacebuilding that will be designed to capitalise on the core of the original conflict resolution and peacebuilding agendas: addressing the needs and root causes of the conflict, connecting the new liberal state or polity with older, locally recognisable and contextual, customary, political, social and economic traditions, and engaging with grass roots and the most marginalised members of post-conflict societies (Richmond and Franks, 2011).

However, the field of peacebuilding (and conflict resolution) remains essentially a Western field dominated by Western academia and schools of thoughts. In the case of peacebuilding, there is not a clear alternative to liberal peacebuilding that is not rooted on Western liberal principles. And none of the alternative approaches to peacebuilding have taken into account non-Western approaches to this field. This has created critiques amongst non-Western scholars who believe that 'western' assumptions on which conflict resolution rest are not applicable universally' (Salem, in Ramsbotham et al, 2011). In response Woodhouse argued that although most of the conflict resolution theories and practices have been articulated in the West, their deep roots and principles reach into far older world traditions from which they draw their inspiration (Woodhouse in Ramsbotham et al, 2011). Finding ways to enrich western and non-western traditions on conflict resolution lies at the heart of cosmopolitan conflict resolution.

In order to examine non-western approaches to peacebuilding that could contribute to cosmopolitan conflict resolution, the next chapter is going to examine the Chinese approach to peacebuilding. As it will illustrate, the principles around the Chinese approach, although based on Confucianism and other Chinese philosophies, have similar (or non-conflicting) values to those in the Western world and therefore they could contribute to enriching the conflict resolution and peacebuilding debate and evolution. As stated by Ramsbotham et al, if the central goal of transforming potential violence into non-violent change is not shared cross-culturally, then there is no international, let alone cosmopolitan, conflict resolution field (Ramsbotham et al, 2011).

Chapter Three: The Chinese Approach to Peacebuilding

‘To end poverty, build a road’
Chinese Saying

China believes that poverty is the root cause of many of today’s conflicts, including terrorism, and therefore it considers economic growth as a political imperative to prevent social conflict and unrest. This belief is part of China’s foreign policy discourse and has been stressed by Chinese scholars and officials who frequently point to underdevelopment as a root cause of conflict. Peace and stability is a critical factor for economic development and therefore China has also strongly advocated and used concepts such as ‘peace’, ‘stability’ and ‘development’ in their foreign policy discourse promoting China’s role as a responsible great power. According to Chinese scholars, measures such as reducing poverty and resolving unemployment problems should be the most important tasks when approaching conflict and security issues in conflict affected countries and development should be the cornerstone in the process of conflict prevention, peacekeeping and peacebuilding (Lei, in Saferworld, 2011). But how does China define its approach for peacebuilding? And where is this approach coming from?

This chapter is going to examine first the main characteristics of the Chinese peacebuilding approach. It will then look at some of the historical and philosophical influences that have impacted the peacebuilding approach as well as some of the unique characteristics of the Chinese state. The domestic situation will then be analysed by proving an overview of some of the key social issues that are emerging in China in the post-reform era. Finally, in order to examine how China has implemented its Chinese peacebuilding approach at home, this chapter will look at the ethnic conflicts in Tibet and Xinjiang, going into more detail on the later example to analyse some of the successes and challenges of the approach.

Characteristics of the Chinese Peacebuilding Approach

Although China does not have a specific peacebuilding policy, it has developed a distinct and unique approach to peacebuilding informed by its own experience, culture, its internal

conflicts in Xinjiang and Tibet and its growing influence in conflict-affected states. China bases it approach on the idea of 'developmental peace or peace through development' (Xuejun, 2014), a thesis that believes that social and economic development is a fundamental way to sustainable domestic peace. The Chinese peacebuilding approach also places emphasis on gradual political and social reform and strengthening of national sovereignty in the process of advancing political and economic development. Overall, the Chinese Peacebuilding approach has three main distinct characteristics:

1. Focus on Economic development: The Chinese government considers rapid economic growth a political imperative to prevent massive unemployment, labour unrest and social conflict. Although economic development and social cohesion have been central to the role of the state in Chinese history, it was Den Xiaoping policy of 'tao guang yang hui' (translated as 'bide our time and build our capabilities') one of the first explicit economic development policies of the reform era (Leonard, 2008). This policy meant that China, as a poor and weak country, should avoid conflicts and concentrate on economic development. Since then, the government has based its economic policies on an algorithm derived from its priority on stability: keeping the economic growth by at least seven percent is considered a political imperative to create jobs and prevent the widespread unemployment that could lead to large-scale unrest and social conflict (Shirk, 2008).

2. Strong Government: China's approach to peacebuilding takes a heavily state-centric view promoting the idea of 'strong government' that will drive economic development. According to Chinese scholars, any peacebuilding work should focus on enhancing the concerned country's state capacity instead of weakening its leadership (Lei, 2010). In the international cooperation system, this means direct government-to-government support to strengthen the state capacity and capability. In contrast with the Washington Consensus, this approach rejects 'shock therapy' (introducing market and trade liberalisation oriented policies usually including large-scale privatisation of previously public-owned assets) and the big bang (the sudden deregulation of financial markets that was the cornerstone of Margaret Thatcher's government in the 1980s) in favour of a process of gradual reform based on working through existing institutions with the purpose of creating a strong developmental state capable of steering and leading the process of reform (Jacques, 2012a).

3. Focus on Conflict Prevention: In his farewell address when he concluded his term as premier in 2013, Zhu Rongji emphasised social stability and called on officials to 'deal correctly with inner conflicts among the people in the same situation, deal appropriately with sudden collective incidents, and work hard to resolve grass-roots conflicts and disputes to nip them in the bud' (in Shirk, 2008, page 8). China's peacebuilding approach puts a heavy emphasis on conflict prevention and mitigation in order to maintain order and social stability which are essential pre-requisites to achieve economic development. This characteristic is heavily informed by Confucianism and the 'harmonious society' concept that stresses unity, cohesion and stability as the main features on an ideal society. In the international arena, this has translated in China's preference for the non-military means of persuasion and negotiation and advocating for a more crucial role for dialogue and the power of the example in preventing the negative consequences of power politics, such as the use of force. In other words, Beijing promotes a slow process of continuous dialogue that focuses on managing conflict and on introducing techniques of conflict management based on governmental consent (Odgaard, 2012).

The Chinese Peacebuilding approach is informed by the principles of mutual sovereignty and non-intervention in domestic affairs. Beijing maintains that national governments alone should focus on and respond to matters related to domestic political, economic or social affairs – including internal conflict. China's adherence to strict Westphalian norms derives from its colonial past and experience of foreign domination. China's loss of sovereignty and independence between 1839 and 1949 (known as the 'hundred years of humiliation) was the underlying reference point for much of the Chinese discourse on this matter. The concern on sovereignty was propelled during the twentieth century by China's claim that the West sought to split China by recognising Taiwan or encouraging Tibet's independence. This stance also reflects nation and state-building concerns stemming from confronting an immense population, the imperatives of economic development, and the maintenance of social cohesion in the presence of separatist movements on Chinese territory itself. However, since the reform period, Chinese views on sovereignty and intervention have shown signs of greater flexibility and pragmatism. This is due to two main factors: First, China's domestic concerns with ethnic unrest and separatism, especially in the Eastern province of Xinjiang, helped lead Beijing to adopt a more flexible policy towards sovereignty and intervention since it concerns counterterrorism and requires an international approach. Beijing was particular concern about the domestic implications of Islamic radicalism emerging in

Afghanistan as well as ethnic separatism in other parts of central and South Asia, fearing its spread into China (Gill, 2010). In supporting the US-led war on terrorism, Beijing softened past positions on sovereignty in order to gain greater international and regional support for its efforts to quell potential unrest and terrorism along its Central Asian borders. Secondly, there is an internal debate in China around whether the country should be more proactive on its foreign policy or not. There is an emerging view amongst some Chinese analysts who believe that traditional notions of state sovereignty should be made subordinate to advancing China's overall national interests which required at least some level of cooperation with international society (Carlson, 2011). In recent years there have increasing examples of what has been labelled as "creative involvement" policies (Yizhou, 2012) where China has taken a complete U-turn on the principle of non-interference and decided to intervene in a conflict (the characteristics of the creative involvement policies will be looked in more detail in chapter four). Examples where Beijing has been galvanised to act include: mediator role between Sudan and South Sudan, shuttle diplomacy between India and Pakistan and intervention and mediation in the conflict in Kachin, Myanmar, which will be examined in more detail in chapter five.

A "Civilisation State" - Influences of the Chinese Peacebuilding Approach

The Chinese peacebuilding approach is based on the country's own experience of economic development. China has borne witness to the greatest poverty-reduction program ever seen, with the number of people living in poverty falling from 250 million at the start of the reform process in 1978 to 80 million by the end of 1993, 29.27 million in 2001 and 26 million in 2007, thereby accounting for three quarters of global poverty reduction during this period (Jacques, 2012a, page 186). The Chinese approach is also based on the unique characteristics of the Chinese state as the guardian of social cohesion and stability. In Chinese history, if the state failed to develop the economy and improve people's living standards or cope with major natural calamities, it would lose the hearts and minds of the people and hence lose the 'mandate of heaven'. For instance, in the period of Imperial China, the government transported bulk commodities (grain, salt, copper etc.) over long distances since these were crucial for maintaining the stability, cohesion and subsistence of the population. The priorities of the imperial state tended to be focussed on the maintenance of order and balance development rather than narrow profit-making and industrialisation. Based on these

influences, China's approach to development and governance is that of pragmatism: a commitment to doing whatever it takes to promote growth while maintaining political stability, itself a prerequisite for economic development (Ying, 2011)

A civilisation state and the role of Confucianism

A major underlying factor influencing China's involvement in the world is its sense of itself as a civilisation. With its five thousand years of history, huge geographic and demographic scale and diversity, China has been defined as the only "civilisation state" (Jacques, 2012a). Unlike in Western countries where national identity has in great part been shaped by their history as nation-states, Chinese identity is described as a product of its civilisation history. The uniqueness of the Chinese civilisation state is characterised by a large population, vast territory, long traditions, rich culture, unique language, unique politics, unique society and a unique economy (Weiwei, 2012). The longevity of the Chinese civilisation has engendered a strong sense of unity and common identity, a process that has included mixing, melding, absorption and assimilation of a multitude of diverse races. As described by Lucien Pye 'what binds the Chinese together is their sense of culture, race, and civilisation, not an identification with the nation state' (Pye, L. in Jacques, 2012a, page 247). The concrete uses of history in China are part of the present Chinese condition; they both reflect and create the present. These historical references are shaped by present day circumstances and help construct a particular picture of the present. For instance, its experiences and memory of the 'century of humiliation' inform much of the current Chinese popular nationalism (Barabantseva, 2011). This has profound implications to understand the behaviour and character of the Chinese state as its main priority is to ensure unity and plurality as the condition of its existence.

Since the 1989 massacre in Tiananmen Square, there has been a noticeable departure from Marxist ideology in favour of the popularisation of Confucian values in public and official discourse in China. Some Chinese analysts argue that the revival of Confucianism as orthodox ideology is one of the main tasks for the Chinese leadership in the twenty-first century in order to nurture and strength the national spirit and unite the nation (Barabantseva, 2011). Particularly in the domains of culture, morality, education and other means of solidifying national cohesion, the role of the Chinese 'tradition' has been affirmed. Confucian thought

has traditionally dominated Chinese culture and behaviours and has set the basis of Chinese government and society for more than two thousand years. Confucian rule is not perceived as an expression of divine authority but is rather based on the idea of an ethical order, an understanding of how society should be ordered, including behaviour and action. Confucius lived during the Warring States Period and the experience of living in a moment of turbulence and instability in a divided country informed his principles of overriding priority of stability and unity. These values as well as the emphasis on moral virtue have informed and shaped the Chinese civilisation ever since rulers were required to govern in accordance with the teachings of Confucius and were expected to set the highest moral standards.

Confucius believed that war between states is the most violent conflict, the main cause of miseries and the chief destroyer of social harmony. To stop war, Confucians masters explored ways to reduce conflicts of interests between states, and sought to bring peace and harmony to the world by means of moral influence and the power of virtue (Yao, 2000). Confucians were not pacifists in the strictest sense. The reality of wars forced them to seek effective ways to end war, and the conception of 'just war', a war which is waged by righteous people, for good causes and for punishing the tyranny and consoling the people, was upheld (Yao, 2000). However, Confucius was more in favour of influencing through virtue and not through violence. Confucius' answer to the conflicts of his era was the 'Way' of the just and harmonious society (Kissinger, 2011). His philosophy sought the redemption of the state through righteous individual behaviour. This stress on unity, stability, cohesion and solidarity has been a constant feature in Confucian societies. However, harmony and moderation do not necessarily mean complacency and passivity; rather they refer more to 'seeking common ground while reserving differences' and to achieving what Confucius called 'harmony in diversity' (Weiwei, 2012). The concept of 'harmony in diversity' is often the goal of an ideal society, as this society will encapsulate the three harmonies: person's internal harmony, harmony among humans and harmony between humans and nature (Weiwei, 2012). Similarly, the Philosophy of Xunzi also believed that conflict is inevitable and that human nature incline naturally towards evil, therefore competing for selfish interests is a natural phenomenon that leads inevitable to violent conflict. He also believed that man's evil nature is the root cause of international conflict: 'if in seeking to satisfy their desires men observe no measure and apportion things without limits, then it would be impossible for them not to contend over the means to satisfy their desire. Such contention leads to disorder. Disorder leads to poverty' (in Xuetong, 2011)

The role and characteristics of the Chinese state

"There is no Chinese institution that is more distinctive – or indigenous – than the Chinese state" (Jacques, 2012b). For the Chinese the state is seen as a natural and intrinsic part of the society. It is regarded not in a narrowly political way, but more broadly as a source of meaning, moral behaviour and order. The Confucian concept of a harmonious society is based on a role-based system of ethics, in which the governed and the governors respect and protect each other's place. The ruled are subservient to the ruler, but only because the ruler fulfils the important duties of ensuring livelihood, shelter, education, and security from foreign invasion (Halper, 2010). During Imperial China, the Chinese mandate of Heaven established moral criteria for holding powers, which enable the Chinese to distance themselves from their rulers and to speculate on their virtue and sustainability (which differs from the Western's ruler accession to monarchy which rested solely on birth). A succession of bad harvests, or growing poverty might bring into question the right of a particular emperor to continue his role which could in turn lead to and sustain huge popular uprisings. Moreover, in Confucian East Asian societies political associations are themselves seen as being properly modelled after the family and the clan, hence participants are expected to act as though they are bound together in a blood relationship (Pye, 1985). For all these reasons, China has developed an institution that has very different characteristics to that of the Western model. Some of this characteristics that distinguish the Chinese state from any Western institution include the following:

Unity and cohesion as the central role of the state: The Confucian legacy in China meant that the ultimate values of government were stability, continuity, and harmonious relations among all members. Throughout its history, Chinese governments have been deeply preoccupied with stability and unity because ruling such a vast country has always been a hugely difficult act of governance requiring attentiveness to the causes and sources of opposition. According to Jacques, the Chinese commitment to unity has three dimensions: the fundamental priority attached to unity by both the state and the people; the central role expected of the state in ensuring that this unity is maintained; and a powerful sense of a common Chinese identity that underpins this overarching popular commitment to unity (Jacques, 2012a). This civic agreement between the state and its citizens reflect important aspects of the China model today: the ruling elites ensure quality of life and cohesion, in return, the

people let them retain their monopoly on political power. As demonstrated by President Hu Jintao in his speech at the Chinese Communist Party Congress in 2007 (in Kerr, 2011):

> 'We must reinforce unity, take heed of the overall situation, conscientiously safeguard the integrity and unity of the whole Party, preserve the organic relations between the Party and masses, consolidate the great unity of the ethnic peoples of the whole country, strengthen the great unity of the sons and daughters of the Chinese nation at home and overseas, promote the great unity of the Chinese people with the people of all countries of the world, in order to provide the immense power to overcome all difficulties and obstructions and propel the cause of the party and people toward new and greater triumphs'

Legitimacy of the government through a non-democratic system: Ever since Confucius, the Chinese state has been perceived as the embodiment and guardian of Chinese civilisation and responsible for maintaining its unity which is why it has enjoyed such huge authority and legitimacy even though not a single vote is cast for the government (Weiwei, 2012). This claim around the legitimacy of the Chinese state was also reinforced by a survey conducted by Tony Saich of Harvard's Kennedy School in 2009 that showed that no less than 95.9 per cent of Chinese were either relatively or extremely satisfied with the central government - although this figure fell to 61.5 per cent at the local level (Jacques, 2012a). These figures indicate a high level of satisfaction even in the absence of a western-style democratic system. This evidence suggests that democracy is not the only one determinant of a state's legitimacy. Weiwei and Jacques believes that the reason behind this lies in some of the unique characteristics of the Chinese state and the fact that its authority derives from an entirely different source: its role as the protector, guardian and embodiment of Chinese civilisation (Weiwei, 2012 and Jacques, 2012a). Moreover, the Chinese perceive the state differently from westerners. According to Jacques, westerners perceive the state as an outsider, an interloper, or even a necessary evil that must be constantly held to account and justified. The Chinese, on the other hand, view the state as an intimate, as part of the family, even as the head of the family (Jacques, 2012a).

Different historical evolutions and values: The historical evolution and construction of the Chinese state also differs from that of any western state. In China, the state acquired a

modernised form, with a centralised administration recruited by means of the imperial examination system that was capable of governing a vast country, long before this was the case in Europe; and developed a range of powers over the economy, population and the military, such as the capacity to move grain around the country and undertake huge infrastructural projects, again much earlier than Europe (Jacques, 2012b). China was never engaged in sustained contact with another country on the basis of equality for the simple reason that it never encountered societies of comparable culture or magnitude. However, throughout its history, the Chinese state never espoused the American notion of universalism to spread its values around the world (Kissinger, 2011).

Illiberal characteristics: In the Confucian view, the exclusion of the people from government was regarded as a positive virtue, allowing the government officials to be responsive to the ethics and ideals with which they had been inculcated. This view entailed that all power should emanate from above, from the centre, and from a single supreme leader (Pye, 1985). This centralisation of power was made easier by the strong sense of racial identity, in spite of linguistic and cultural differences, and the overriding sense that the Chines have of their common racial roots. However, this characteristic of the Chinese state prevented the development of any type of western-style civil society organisations either in the Confucian period or more recently in the Communist period (Jacques, 2012b). Bu on the other hand, the lack of a democratic system has allowed the state to develop an ability to think and act in ways that address the long term issues.

All of these characteristics inform the way China sees peace as well as the role that the state should play in it in order to achieve social stability and unity. The next section is going to look at the domestic situation and the internal conflicts in China as another factor that have influenced the Chinese peacebuilding approach.

China's internal conflicts: the origins of the Chinese Peacebuilding Approach

Currently there are a varied and wide-ranging social issues in China, which are a combined result of the Chinese economic reforms that started in the late 1970s, China's political and cultural history and its vast population. These issues impact and influence the Chinese peacebuilding approach as well as its foreign policy. The following section is going to examine in more details some of these social issues. The first part will look at social conflict in

China and some of the social issues derived from the rapid economic growth. The second section will explore ethnic conflict in China with a deeper analysis on the situation in Xinjiang and how the Chinese government has implemented its peacebuilding approach in its Western region.

Social conflict in China

There is limited research on social conflict in China. With 'an overriding need for stability' and 'a harmonious society' as the official policy lines, the potential negative social and political impacts of social conflict make it a highly sensitive topic in China (Jianrong, 2007). Chinese academics tend to stay away from the subject resulting in a lack of in-depth and systematic research on social conflict in China and its root causes. From the limited existing research, it seems that most of the social conflict in China is related to the economic reforms and the widening gap between rich and poor and between the rural and urban areas. The current social issues that already have or could in the future deteriorate into social unrest can be grouped in the following categories:

Inequality

Rapid urbanisation and modernisation has widening the income gap which could cause destabilisation of the society as well as social unrest. The gap between the rich and poor has widened during the reform era: the richest 10 percent hold 45 percent of the country's wealth, and the poorest 10 percent have only 1.4 percent (in Shirk, 2008, page 30). Also, people in China's richest areas make twice as much as residents of the five poorest areas. The impact and consequences of growing inequality have already been acknowledged by the Chinese government. Ma Kai, China's top economic planner, said in 2004: 'the widening wealth gap caused as cities and coastal areas race ahead of the hinterland could spark social unrest and undermine the government's authority over the country's 1.3 billion people' (in Shirk, 2008, page 31). Even if Premier Wen Jiabao in 2006 promised 'to pay attention to maintaining social equality and give priority to issues concerning the immediate interests of the people' (in Shirk, 2008, page 30) demonstrations by laid-off workers, dissatisfied farmers, urban migrants, and ethnic minorities have become an everyday occurrence in China.

Rural Unrest

In Chinese society today, large-scale conflicts are most likely to erupt in rural rather than in urban areas. This is mainly due to the growing inequality. In the past ten years, China has experienced a rapid period of transition from a planned to a market economy and in the process, farmers' economic interests have grown far more slowly than the national average. This widening 'wealth gap' has made social justice a focal issue for resentful peasants and rural unrest has spread and grown in scale (Jianrong, 2007). Land seizures and environment pollution are the two issues that are driving farmers to violent action. Some Chinese scholars argue that even acknowledging that the urban-rural gap in China is quite large, the Chinese rural areas have also undergone an enormous transformation over the past three decades, though smaller in scale than the cities. For instance, life span in the Chinese rural areas has increased to around seventy years, most people live in brick-built houses and 82% of the population in Tibet (China's least developed and most monotonous region) have access to electricity (Weiwei, 2012, page 32-33). Nevertheless, as the situation has deteriorated in the last years with more incidents reported, it has attracted more notice from journalists and the central government as the peasants' direct confrontation of local governments has shaken the foundations of the Chinese state (Jianrong, 2007).

Land disputes

Peasant interests have also been gravely impacted by the huge tide of land appropriation in recent years: there were an estimated 180,000 mass protest incidents in China in 2011 and more than 60% had to do with land disputes (Jianrong, 2007). Rapidly developmental coastal provinces are the site of most of the clashes over land seizures. China has a socialist system of land ownership, where land is either owned by the state or collectively owned by the working masses. Peasant farmers do not own land and are entitled only the right to use land. With the high economic growth and rapid urbanisation, a large amount of farm land has been expropriated, particularly in rural areas bordering big cities. As the government is technically both owner of the land and administer of its use (and often a developer itself), the appropriation of land is not supervised, resulting in frequent abuse which leads to frequent unrest (Jianrong, 2007).

Ethnic Unrest in the Western Border Regions

Even if social conflict is getting more attention from the central government, the main source of tension and conflict in China is carried out by ethnic and religious minorities in the Western border regions of Tibet and Xinjiang. Tibet and Xinjiang together account for around on-third of China's territory and both are strategically important border regions. The Tibetan and the Uighur are both ethnically and racially different from the Han Chinese and both regions shared a similar history with the rest of China. When the Communist party seized power in 1949, substantial regions had broken away from the historic Chinese Empire, notably Tibet, parts of Xinjiang, parts of Mongolia, and the border areas of Myanmar. Mao, like several founders of dynasties before him, claimed the frontiers of China that the empire had established at its maximum historic extent. As soon as the civil war ended, Mao set out to reoccupy the secessionists regions, such as Xinjiang, Inner Mongolia and eventually Tibet. Since then, the Chinese government has partially implemented its peacebuilding approach of focus on economic development to address poverty and also in order to win acceptance of the population and ensure social stability in the regions.

Tibet

The conflict over Tibet's status has been a conflict over history (Sperling, 2004). China maintains that Tibet is an inalienable part of China and Tibetans maintain that Tibet has historically been an independent country. When China's last dynasty, the Qing, collapsed in 1911, Tibet emerged as a *de facto* independent state but that independence was not recognised by China or acknowledged by Britain, India or any other state. Tibet's *de facto* independence came to an end in 1949 with the establishment of the People's Republic of China and the region was incorporated into China through an agreement signed in 1951. Subsequent decades witnessed the implementation of radically different and contradictory Chinese policies in the Tibetan Plateau which have serve to exacerbate the Sino-Tibetan relations. On one hand, these policies included the establishment of the Tibetan Autonomous Region in 1965; the attempt to suppress a separate Tibetan identity in the 1960s and 1970s; and repression of separatists' tendencies and allegiance to the Dalai Lama in the 1990s (including refusing to recognise the Dalai Lama, restricting the role of the Buddhist priests and forbidding Tibetan students and government workers from visiting monasteries or participating in religious ceremonies). On the other hand, China made a major effort to generate economic growth and raise living standards in the belief that this would help win the acceptance of Tibetans. Beijing's plan was to solidify its position in Tibet by investing substantial funds into

development (which includes a target of 10% economic growth per annum and a doubling of average income per decade) rather than by making concessions on ethnic sensibilities (Goldstein,1995). The economic plan has been successful and development standards have improved. Since 1950, Tibetan living standards and life expectancy have been transformed, with annual economic growth averaging 12 per cent and incomes raising by more than 10 per cent annually (Jacques, 2012a, page 319). According to Goldstein, through these policies, Beijing is hoping on a process of 'acculturation' in which the Han Chinese will open up Tibetans to new ideas and attitudes and a create a new 'modern' Tibetan in the process who will not be so influence by religion and lamas (Goldstein, 1995). Moreover, though the improvements and investment on the education system, Beijing is also trying to create a modern and better educated Tibetan elite.

However, in order to achieve this economic growth, China has allowed non-Tibetans to do business in Tibet and encouraged large scale Han migration to Tibet. This influx has resulted in non-Tibetans controlling a large segment of the local economy at all levels, from 'street corner bicycle repairmen to electronic goods store owners, to firms trading with the rest of China' (Goldstein,1995). Despite this definite increased in Han migration to Tibet, such migration is not stable as migrants do not tend to settle in the long term and just stay in the area to complete infrastructure projects. These non-Tibetan migrants are part of a 'floating population' as they are individuals who live and work temporarily in another city. Also, while Han migration to Xinjiang and Inner Mongolia has a strong agrarian focus, contemporary migration to Tibetan areas has been almost entirely urban in destination (Fisher, 2004). This migration policy has had negative repercussions. The local Tibetans believe that the Han population are the biggest beneficiaries of the economic growth as the Hans live in urban areas where the economic change has concentrated, run most of the business and shops, and dominate positions of power and privilege in the administration. This is partially due to the fact that this rapid economic growth has focussed excessively on urban administrative development and large-scale construction projects. As a result, urban-rural inequalities in the Tibetan areas are considerably higher than everywhere else in China (Fisher, 2004). This situation still leads to distrust and resentment and exacerbates tension between both groups which could lead to conflict.

The Chinese government has implemented a similar approach in the Xinjiang province with similar results and challenges. The next section will examine this example in more detail.

Development policies to combat social unrest in Xinjiang

Xinjiang (which means New Frontier) has for more than two thousand years slipped in and out of China until the Communists took firm control of the region in 1949. Xinjiang borders eight countries which gives it considerable strategic importance, not least because three of these borders – those with Tajikistan, Pakistan and India – remain disputed (Holdstock, 2014). The region composes one-sixth of China's total land area, containing a wealth of oil and minerals. The area is the homeland of the Uighur ethnic group, Sunni Muslims, who have more in common with Central Asia than with China's majority Han ethnic group mainly as they speak a Turkish tongue that is very different from Han Chinese. During Mao's regime, Islam was tolerated in the region, albeit under the strict control of the Chinese Communist Party in the 1950s, but it suffered greatly during the Cultural Revolution of the late 1960s. Mosques were closed down or destroyed and imams were imprisoned. During this period, all minority ethnic and religious identities disappeared from view. They rapidly re-emerged in the post 1979 Reform and Opening period demonstrating that they had not been erased from the consciousness of the people (Dillon 2014).

The idea that Xinjiang should be considered part of China (both historically and at present) is contested by some Uighurs, especially those active in diaspora organisations. While the level of support among Uighurs for separatist ideas is unclear (Holdstock, 2014), there is certainly widespread resentment against the Chinese government's policies in the region leading to frequent outbreaks of ethnic violence. According to the Chinese government, Uighur separatist carried out two hundred terrorist attacks between 1990 and 2001 that killed 162 people and injured more than 440 (source Shirk, 2008, page 58). China's attempts to suppress the violence have led some to complain of a broader clampdown on Uighur culture and religion. Although as an ethnic minority Uighurs enjoy affirmative action policies such as relaxed university admission standards and less stringent policies on birth control, resentment against these policies in the region is growing. For instance, under family planning regulations Han citizens may only have one child, while Uighurs (and other ethnic minorities) in the province are allowed to have two, but many Uighurs still regard this as too restrictive. Additional complaints include economic exclusion, arbitrary detention, the exclusion of the

Uyghur language from education and cultural oppression, and religious restrictions (Holdstock, 2014)

Xinjiang has a big economic and strategic value for China. It possesses 25 per cent of China's crude oil reserves; 38 per cent of China's coal reserves; and 25 per cent of China's natural gas reserves (source: Lim Li and Ritzen, 2015). Over the last sixty years there has been a steady migration of Han into Xinjiang which has accelerated rapidly in recent years after the government introduced a drive to open up the western regions, and especially the oil and gas industry in order to exploit the region's natural resources. The development strategy of the Chinese government for the region is to reverse the traditional focus on cotton production as well as to promote urbanisation and the creation of a strong domestic metropolitan market (Odgaard, 2012). The oil and petrochemical sector now accounts for 60 per cent of the Xinjiang economy, being China's second largest producer, with abundant reserves of oil and gas (Jacques, 2012a, page 321). However, as in Tibet, there is a perception that the Han population has benefited more than the Uighur leading to higher economic disparities, tensions and riots.

Xinjiang and China's strategic engagement in Central Asia

Xinjiang is also important for China's energy security as a transit province for gas and oil from a number of Central Asian republics. The energy deals China has signed with Xinjiang's neighbours are key elements of China's overall engagement strategy for Central Asia. Opening up the Western borders allowed cross border commerce for the first time in thirty years. This trade revived links between families and communities that had been separated since the early 1960s. But it also enabled cultural and religious organisations to link up which gave considerable support to the growing separatist movement in Xinjiang (Johnson, 2007). Beijing authorities began to see the development of these groups as linked to events beyond China's borders, the solution of which required a multinational regional response. The creation of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) with Russia, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan was a response to these developments. With the goal of establishing a regional security mechanism through which to resolve border issues and improve border security, the members committed themselves to combat 'the three evil forces: terrorism, separatism and extremism' (Gill, 2010). Establishing the SCO helped China create a narrative for itself as a responsible and rising great power, as it establishes a narrative

framework for a region in which China has limited experience and not much in common and because it also demonstrates how China can engage in regionalist issues as other great powers do.

The situation in Xinjiang therefore heavily informs Chinese foreign policy in Central Asia. Central Asia occupies an increasingly important position in China's neighbourhood. China needs Central Asia to help it achieve three strategic goals: to develop its western regions, to diversify its energy supplies, and to guarantee the security of the Chinese autonomous region of Xinjiang (Godement, 2014). The Chinese government's diplomatic, economic, and security initiatives in the region are driven by its desire to achieve these objectives. China's strategy towards Central Asia it is heavily shaped by its domestic outlook as Beijing is concerned that instability in Central Asia might spill over into Xinjiang. China's interests are therefore defensive, as it seeks to prevent any instability in the region from reaching its borders and it sees the development of close ties with Russia and the Central Asia states as intrinsic to stability in the Xinjiang region. China's security policy underscores its heavy investment in Central Asia, the rationale being that this will fuel economic development in the region, thus reducing the prospects of unrest in countries neighbouring Xinjiang, and in turn reducing the threat to China's own stability and territorial integrity (Saferworld, 2015).

Although China has little interest in becoming the regional hegemony in Central Asia and acknowledges and respects Russia's dominant role in the region (as well as Moscow's strong relationship with the Central Asian countries), it does aspire to recognition as a strategic principal power. Some scholars believe that Beijing's Central Asia policy is shaped by four principal set of interests: strategic positioning, national security, border stability and economics and trade (Kornberg and Faust 2005). But the reality is that China offers an attractive model for Central Asian states and is becoming a key stakeholder in the region. The combination of strong state authority and free market capitalism is undoubtedly attractive to Central Asian leaders looking to develop their economies, while keeping a firm lid on dissent and social unrest. China is also developing its cultural diplomacy and using its soft power in the region, focusing mainly on academic cooperation. The Chinese government has increased the number of scholarships available each year to Central Asian students. And Confucius Institutes have been opened in Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Ka-

zakhstan (Godement, 2014). The benefits to China will come in the form of preventing separatism in Xinjiang, working together to combat terrorism, developing trade, and securing access to new energy sources.

Development as a solution to social unrest

China's policy in Xinjiang has been to 'use development to promote stability, use stability to ensure development, and further consolidate and develop equal, united, cooperative, and harmonious socialist ethnic relations' (in Odgaard, 2012, page 164). The 1999 'Great Western Development Plan' was designed as the long term development investment in the province. The plan involved an investment of $13 billion and 78 separate large-scale projects that included building railways and herd settlers westwards in order to 'open-up' the western provinces (Johnson, 2007). The heavy investment in the region has had positive effects. The Xinjiang economy has been growing at around 11 per cent per annum for the last six years, (Jacques, 2012a, page 322) which is above the national average. Living standards in Xinjiang have also risen since the region was taken over by China in 1949. Literacy rate increased from 10 per cent in 1953, to 73.4 per cent in 1990 and 96.58 per cent in 2011. Life expectancy has also increased from 31 years in 1953, to 63 years in 1990 and to 71 years in 2011 (source: Lim Li and Ritzen, 2015)

However, many Uighurs say that they have seen little of that wealth as vast numbers of Han Chinese have migrated to Xinjiang to take advantage of the economic opportunities there. Despite the investment in infrastructure (new motorways, railways and a new airport) and investment in the oil and cotton industries the realities have been disappointing for the population in Xinjiang. Uighur have not appreciated China's efforts to develop the region and bring it out of poverty as they see that most services serve the needs of tourists and migrants from the east. The influx of Han migrants also fuels these perceptions. Four decades ago only 15 percent of the region's population had been Han Chinese but that figure is now 50 percent with an inflow of 1.2 million workers in 2008 alone (Jacques, 2012a, page 322). The Chinese government policies have not had the impact expected with foreign investors as they are still deterred by the remoteness of Xinjiang, the vast distances (which imply huge transport costs), the complexities of Chinese bureaucracy, taxation and corruption and fears of sabotage and riots. Moreover, the Uighurs believe that the economic profits are not being reinvested locally. For instance, of the oil and gas revenue being generated currently, the profits are small and barely 2 percent is reinvested locally in education and administration.

Farmland is sold cheaply to new migrants but the chief beneficiary is the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps, not the Uighur population (Johnson, 2007). According to Hessler, one of the main issues with the Chinese approach in Xinjiang was its failure to understand and respect the Uighur culture. The Han Chinese rarely learned the local language which resulted in miscommunications and misperceptions that affected their relationship (Hessler, 2001). The lack of engagement with the Uighur community led to many misperceptions as to the real intentions of the Chinese government in the region. Was the policy really about the development or assimilation of the Uighur? Or was it about the exploitation of the area's resources and the pacification of its population?

The role of religion also impacted China's approach in Xinjiang. China has an unusual view of religion and treats it as a form of ideology that is acceptable as a system of individual belief which should not be turned into an ethic of community, especially if this is an alternative to being Chinese (Kerr, 2011). China does not have a stable system of relations with the Islamic world and it remains concerned about the compatibility of practices of governance in the two communities in Xinjiang. In discussing the problems of coexistence between the Islamic world and other societies, Chinese analysts have been particularly adamant in rejecting any notion of a 'clash of civilisations'. But this still leaves China with the complex question of how it can establish its own preferences for governance in a region riven with contentious politics but unified in its scepticism about the helpfulness of external intervention (Kerr, 2011)

Critics argue that the violence is really a reflection of local concerns about their treatment, overwhelming Han migration and the lack of jobs. China is eager to exploit Xinjiang's oil and cotton, and sees the province as a space to resettle its population from the east, but some suggest the plan is to deliberately swamp the Uighur (Johnson, 2007). As in Tibet, the socio-economic structure of the workforce reflects a very marked ethnic divide with the Han dominating commercial activities, the bureaucracy, oil and gas, and the Uighur living in the smaller towns in the rural areas.

Applying the Chinese Peacebuilding Approach at home

Some observers fear the consequences of instability that could be caused by a collapsing, rather than a rising China. A China that cannot control flows of immigration, environmental implications on the global climate, and internal conflict poses serious problems. As Susan

Shirk describes, ‘it is China’s internal fragility, not its growing strength, that presents the greatest danger’ (Shirk, 2008). Or as President Bill Clinton put it in 1999: ‘while most people worry about the challenge of a strong China, let us not forget the risk of a weak China, beset by internal conflict, social dislocation and criminal activity; becoming a vast zone of instability in Asia’ (in S. Nye Jr., 2011).

China is genuinely concerned about maintaining domestic peace and stability. Not only because the economy needs that stability to keep growing, but also because any internal conflict could potentially affect the legitimacy of the government. However, the Chinese peacebuilding approach of focusing on economic development and conflict prevention in order to minimise conflicts and instability has had a limited success in both Tibet and Xinjiang. In the case of Xinjiang, economic growth has not diminished the tensions between the Han and the Uighur, who increasingly feel excluded in their own homeland. Similarly to Tibet, the key problems that the government has to confront are those of inequality and discrimination. Dissatisfied groups are not only ethnic groups in Tibet and Xinjiang. A similar interaction pattern can be found among disgruntled workers, farmers, and other elements of society who consider themselves marginalised by the Chinese polity. This type of dissatisfaction emerges in social issues such as corruption, pollution, inequality, the failure to compensate people for expropriated land etc.

Therefore, China’s strategy in Xinjiang and Tibet has only partially succeeded. Despite impressive progress on development, economic growth and education, Beijing’s strategy to merely satisfy demands through improving conditions is not working as expected mainly because it is not addressing the root causes of the dissatisfaction. In the case of Tibet and Xinjiang, economic development on its own has not seemed to resolve the tensions (some may argue that it has exacerbated the tensions). In other words, China’s strategy for maintaining domestic peace and security implies that it has yet to develop an effective model for how to apply its peacebuilding approach at home. A more context-sensitive approach in its ethnic regions and comprehensive measures that address the root causes of the conflicts and the inequalities created by the rapid economic growth are needed.

Chapter Four: China’s Global Peace Engagement Strategy

‘Listen to all, pluck a feather from every passing goose, but follow no one absolutely’
Chinese proverb

For much of its history, Chinese civilisation saw no reason to engage the world. Its mind always focussed on developing Chinese civilisation not developing a global civilisation. Ever since the end of the nineteenth century, and arguably since the First Opium War, Chinese foreign policy has been dominated by the country’s relative impotence and the necessity of adapting to Western norms and a Western-dominated international system. However, since the end of the Cold War, Chinese officials have become more attentive to foreign perceptions of China’s international behaviour and an indigenous Chinese foreign policy has begun to emerge. In the last decades, China has shown a more moderate, dynamic, context-specific and accommodating foreign policy, oriented towards maintaining regional stability, and increasing its membership and involvement in regional and multilateral bodies. The Chinese leadership is seen as determined to avoid foreign confrontation as it pursues economic development at home and abroad. China is thus more concerned about how its rise is perceived in the eyes of other countries, wishing to be accepted and recognised not only as a member of the international community but also as a ‘responsible great power’. China’s efforts to prove that it is a responsible power have succeeded in Asia and beyond. International opinion polls indicate that people around the world view China positively, more positively than the United States (Shirk, 2008).

The evolution in foreign policy and transition from economic, military and ideological self-reliance to active engagement in regional and global multilateral structures is part of China’s ‘Peaceful coexistence’ strategic thinking. As a result, China’s global and regional diplomacy has dramatically changed. China’s identity in international affairs has evolved from one based on a defensive power marked by insecurity to that of a confident and ascending great power. As China’s interests broadened, it also became more concerned about improving its national image. China started using the concepts of ‘peace’ and ‘harmony’ as part of its foreign policy strategy as early as in 1954. China’s security strategies and foreign policy have since then encompassed conflict resolution, diplomacy and legitimacy. These concepts have been used in order to reduce the fear of an aggressive China rise that could impact the current international order.

This chapter will examine some of the characteristics of the Chinese foreign policy, its roots in Confucianism, its principles and its evolution as China socialises with the rest of the international community. It will then examine the Chinese Global Peace Engagement strategy as a way for China to promote peace through growing trade, investment and economic cooperation with the rest of the world (including conflict-affected states) and through the provision of aid and support of international institutions such as the UN on peacekeeping and peacebuilding operations. Finally, this chapter will examine how this strategy has been implemented in Africa and some of the challenges and successes of the Chinese policy in Sudan and South Sudan as an example.

A unique foreign policy

Roots of the Chinese Foreign Policy

Chinese foreign policy is rooted in its own philosophical values and norms and it normally reflects a very unique approach to strategy and diplomacy. It generally exhibits three characteristics that are very distinct from the Western approach to diplomacy: long-term approach and vision and a more holistic way of perceiving politics; careful study of tactical options, and detached exploration of operational decisions.

Chinese foreign policy is heavily influenced by the teachings of Sun Tzu. In his book 'The Art of War', Sun Tzu emphasises the psychological and political elements over the military. Where Western strategists reflect on the means to assemble superior power at the decisive point, Sun Tzu addresses the means of building a dominant political and psychological position, such that the outcome of a conflict becomes a foregone conclusion. And where Western strategists test their maxims by victories in battles; Sun Tzu tests by victories where battles have become unnecessary (Kissinger, 2011). These approach was encapsulated on the 28 characters Den Xiaoping used for political wisdom: 'observe and analyse (developments) calmly; deal (with changes) patiently and confidently; secure (our own) position; conceal (our) capabilities and avoid the limelight; be good at keeping a low profile; never become a leader; strive to make achievements' (Mahbubani, 2008, page 224)

This tactical approach is also reflected on the way Chinese deal with diplomacy. According to Henri Kissinger who led the re-open of the communication channels between the US and

China, rarely do Chinese statesman risk the outcome of a conflict on a single all-or-nothing clash; on the contrary, elaborate multiyear manoeuvres are closer to their style. Where the Western tradition 'prized the decisive clash of forces emphasising feats of heroism, the Chinese ideal stressed subtlety, indirection, and the patient accumulation of relative advantage' (Kissinger, 2011). For the Chinese, the notion of power emphasised the importance of timing, of selecting the propitious moment, of understanding when best to act (Pye, 1985). Moreover, Kissinger describes that:

> "China's negotiators use diplomacy to weave together political, military, and physiological elements into an overall strategic design. Diplomacy to them is the elaboration of a strategic principle. They ascribe no particular significance to the process of negotiation as such; nor do they consider the opening of a particular negotiation a transformational event. They do not think that personal relations can affect their judgement though they might invoke personal ties to facilitate their own efforts. They have no emotional difficulty with deadlocks; they consider them the inevitable mechanism of diplomacy. They prize gestures of goodwill only if they serve a diginable objective or tactic. And they patiently take the long view against impatient interlocutors, making time their ally" (Kissinger, 2011, page 222)

Because of the unique characteristics, China has developed a distinctive approach to diplomacy which is reflected in their foreign policy and its principles.

Peaceful Coexistence: The Principles of Chinese Foreign Policy

The foreign policy framework that emerged early in Den Xiaoping's era, and that has continued to exert an influence, was named the "five principles of peaceful coexistence". These principles included: "mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual non-aggression, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence" (MacDougall, 2007). These principles are based on the Confucian ideal of Great Harmony: a foreign policy that promotes international peace while allowing for legitimate national self-interests (Bell, 2010). Den Xiaoping's new strategy meant that China should stay neutral in wars, conflicts about spheres of influence or struggles over natural resources. In order to do this, Beijing should be 'humble and yield on small issues with the long term in mind' (Leonard, 2008). China should open its arms to any country that could

assist in its quest for markets, natural resources and political support. The principles around coexistence have been the cornerstone of China's national security strategy. Coexistence is defined by Odgaard as the attempt to preserve peace and stability through common habits and practices designed to regulate international conduct (Odgaard, 2012, page 5). In the case of China, the means are the establishment of conflict resolution mechanisms for the purpose of system preservation, the use of conference diplomacy to make within-system adjustments, and agreement on common definitions of legitimate political authority. The end is to offload the cost of pursuing national security concerns onto the international community by making it a common responsibility for the collective of international actors. Odgaard argues that coexistence is a strategy of influence for emerging powers as it implies that states may pursue their national interests as long as these do not jeopardise international stability and it does not require the military, economic, financial and knowledge capabilities to adopt strategies of coercion and imposition. Rather, states pursuing coexistence seek to establish a global order in which conflicts can be resolved without breaching the consensus about what constitutes legitimate spheres of influence (Odgaard, 2012). The five principles of coexistence went on to become the basic foundations of Chinese foreign policy. Three of the 'five principles of peaceful coexistence' still heavily influence China's relations and impact the Chinese peacebuilding approach. Those are the principles of 'peaceful coexistence' and respect of sovereignty and non-interference in domestic affairs.

Due to China's own history and its sensitivity on issues such as Taiwan and Tibet, China's bilateral relations since the end of the Cold War largely adhere to the Westphalian view on the primacy of state sovereignty and determined by the principle of non-interference. This meant that domestic political affairs were seen as the exclusive concern of national governments and therefore other states should respect this principle, no matter the conduct of the government. China has used the principle of non-interference as a means through which it can maintain stable relations with host governments to ensure economic cooperation continues unaffected by possible political changes. Beijing uses this principle also to explain why China's relations with host governments are state centric (government to government) arguing that national governments alone should focus on and respond to matters related to domestic political, economic and social affairs – including internal conflict. China believes that the principle of non-interference is inherently peaceful. Yet some analysts have argued that China has worsened internal situations in countries that are either authoritarian, human rights violators, in conflict or post-conflict settings (Saferworld, 2011). Moreover, critiques of

this approach argue that the non-interference principle undermines good governance, democratisation and human rights. On the other hand, supporters of this approach argue that human rights are “first and foremost a right to subsistence”, with socio-economic rights taking precedence over abstract political rights (Weiwei, 2012). Some analysts believe that by imposing sanctions and isolating countries the West is actually insulating them from socialising with common international norms and protecting their regimes. By contrast if promoting other forms of influence, such as encouraging young people to study overseas and encouraging business to trade and create investment links between them and the rest of the world, change will come much faster to conflict-affected countries (Mahbubani, 2013). Furthermore, supporters also argue that political rights cannot be imposed from the outside and that each country must choose its own path; instead, sovereignty is to be protected and autonomy honoured to allow for indigenous development strategies (Saferworld, 2012).

From non-intervention to creative involvement

Over the last years, Beijing has realised that non-interference in the internal affairs of recipient countries may work to ensure the stability of bilateral relations, but it is no guarantee of internal stability in countries at risk from conflict. For this reason, in recent years, China has softened its interpretation of these principles and has taken a more active diplomatic role in the resolution of internal conflicts as part of a wider strategy to become a ‘responsible power’. One of the new foreign policy strategies suggested by Chinese foreign policy Wang Yizhou referred to as ‘creative involvement’ represents a substantial normative change to China’s principles and strategy.

For Yizhou, creative involvement means moving away from being a norm taker and become a norm maker in the field of foreign affairs and start implanting ‘Chinese characteristics’ by taking a more active part in global governance. It is aimed at ‘getting something done’, emphasising leadership, initiative, and constructiveness in China’s diplomacy by shaping international rules and causing nations to accept China’s right to speak up for its interest while respecting international practices and development trends, (Yizhou, 2012). Although advocating active participation in international affairs, ‘creative involvement’ has essential differences from interventionism. It encourages the active exploration of all possible diplomatic options and advocates for conflict prevention measures (by stressing diplomatic mediation

and economic assistance) and calls for active contact and involvement instead of intervention by force (military-first approach or armed suppression). Yizhou further argues that the concept is not an opposition to the traditional Chinese diplomatic principles, but rather an enrichment of these principles. He believes 'creative involvement' should be always conducted on the basis of international legitimacy and that China should follow three principles when implementing this strategy: 'obeying the UN Charter, being invited or accepted by local people or a majority of political parties in the state concerned, and conforming to the wishes of most of its neighbouring countries' (Yizhou, 2012).

There are increasing examples of 'creative involvement' interventions in both in Asia and Africa. For example, China acted as a mediator between Sudan and South Sudan to protect its oil investments; intervened in Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo by asking Rwanda to remove a key rebel commander who was questioning Chinese investments; and engaged in shuttle diplomacy between India and Pakistan (ICG, 2013b). Recently, China attempted to step into Palestine-Israel mediation in order to secure energy supplies in the Middle East and successfully intervened as a mediator in the Kachin peace talks between the government of Myanmar and an ethnic armed group (see more on this case study on Chapter Four). A key principle in all of these cases was to have the consent by all of the parties involved. A top Chinese official said of the Myanmar mediation in the Kachin conflict, 'we will only do it if invited in. If we are not invited, we will leave' (ICG, 2013b). Regardless of the increasing examples of 'creative involvement' strategies and intervention, non-interference and sovereignty still remain at the core of China's engagement and any policy changes to their interpretation is cautious and in many cases restricted to ad hoc responses to specific contexts. The following section will examine how China has put into practice some of these characteristics and principles into its foreign policy since the reform era and during its peaceful rise in global affairs.

China's peaceful economic rise

Since the 1980s under Deng Xiaoping, Beijing has stated that it pursues an 'independent foreign policy of peace' under which China's fundamental foreign policy goals are to preserve China's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity and to create a favourable international environment for China's reform and opening up and modernisation (Permanent Mission of China to the UN). In order to achieve these goals, China has opted for a path that emphasises economic growth rather than military capacity with the objective

to facilitate the achievement of stability and economic growth within China itself. With the world's largest population and just average living standards, there is a great challenge just to provide the basic needs of the people in terms of employment, food, housing, health and education. From the perspective of foreign policy there is an argument that China should focus on those international relationships that are going to be more helpful for the country's economic growth. Because of the relationship between the government and its citizens, ensuring economic growth is essential as failure to make progress will undermine the existing political system. Therefore, according to the Chinese way of thinking, China will be politically more stable if the economy continues to grow.

Internationally, China has chosen to focus its efforts on creating its own alternative networks, at one level with other rising powers such as other BRICS countries, and on another level with the suppliers of the key resources it needs as inputs for its economy. As a result, China has a mercantilist trade and investment posture in the international arena and has become a major investor in Africa, Latin America, the Middle East and Europe. Its model of economic cooperation has been defined as the 'Walled World' where nation states can trade with each other on global markets but maintain their control over their economic future, their political system and their foreign policy (Leonard, 2008).

Chinese Soft Power

China has been accompanying the rise of its hard economic power with efforts to make itself more attractive (soft power). Combining hard and soft power resources into a single and effective strategy is what S. Nye Jr. has defined as 'Smart Power' (S. Nye Jr., 2011). China's soft power strategy relies on its economic wealth and power, its ability to promote large-scale growth especially for other developing states, cooperation and cultural power (Lanteigne, 2009). It is also founded on promoting Confucian peaceful norms and values in order to reduce the fear and tendencies to balance Chinese power that might otherwise grow among its neighbours. As Chinese officials believe that Chinese culture is quite attractive to foreigners and the tradition that treasures peace is widely appreciated, China recognises that its soft power can be used to enhance China's peaceful rise in the regional and world affairs and to facilitate China's economic development and modernisation. Jacques (2012b) believes that China should have a more expansive view of soft power to include infra-struc-

ture developments (rail network, airports, etc.), family values (such as stronger parental authority, high academic expectations, moral guidelines, in contrast to the more laissez-faire western mentality) and an awareness of the importance of education for national economic performance (Confucian societies place much greater emphasis on education than western societies, as exemplified by the high performance levels that parents expect and demand of their children).

However, even if economic wealth is a fundamental determinant of a country's wider appeal, China's soft power strategy is still not having a global impact. As the example of the economic transformation and poverty reduction of a developing country, and the largest trading partner of many nations in Africa, East Asia, Latin America and elsewhere, China already enjoys considerable respect and influence among developing countries. In contrast, China enjoys very little soft power in the west. The main reasons for this are that China is still a relatively poor developing country and the absence of a Western-type multi-party democracy. Even if the Chinese government has been relying on Confucianism and other philosophical values to shape its discourse and foreign policy in order to confront some of the challenges posed by its rapid economic growth and to project a 'peaceful image', in many Western countries China is still perceived as a rigid and repressive country. As the economic model is inseparable from the political one, even the fast economic growth and cultural civilisation will have little appeal in the West who mainly sees China as an authoritarian regime with limited civil liberties and a track record of human rights violations.

China and International Norms and Institutions

As China's global interests expanded, it has realised that in order to meet its economic interests, a more proactive approach with the international system and its organisations is needed. Therefore, as with its foreign policy, there has been an evolution of China's behaviour towards international institutions: from opposition in 1950s to 1970s to a generally passive position during the 1980s and 1990s when it sought membership in international institutions, to a more selective and activist position in international institutions during the early 2000s when Beijing became more confident, to a more recent, moderately revisionist posture since 2008 that seeks to selectively alter rules, actors and the balance of influence largely from within existing institutions (Shambaugh, 2013).

China has undergone an identity change from a defensive and insecure power to a confident ascending power aspiring to take more responsibility. This has made China more receptive to international pressure and more willing to behave in accordance with international norms. However, there is still no consensus around the debate of whether China is a 'norm maker' or a 'norm taker'. For while China's rising capabilities are undisputed, many scholars believe that China has no interest in leading the creation of a new global order and that it has chosen to not yet assert itself politically (Mahbubani, 2008; Odgaard, 2012). According to this school of thought, Chinese diplomacy remains extremely passive for a state of its size and importance, repeatedly taking a low-key, backseat approach. They see China as risk adverse and narrowly self-interested, not shaping the events and actively contributing to solving problems. On the other hand, other scholars argue that China is trying to establish alternative institutions and norms of global governance and redistribute power and resources within the international system (Shambaugh, 2013). But even if Beijing says that China will peacefully rise as a responsible power within the present international system, and not challenge the structures and norms of the current world order, there seems to be an appetite in China for 'Chinese solutions' for world problems as proven by the success in China of books advocating for a 'Tianxia' world order (Callahan, 2011b).

What is clear is that since the mid-1990s, China's foreign policy has evolved to become more convergent with global norms of cooperation than previously. China has shown an increased willingness to engage with many institutions that are Western dominated and is making selective and strategic use of international organisations through engagement to advance its power and capabilities in the international system and move towards developing as a global power. For instance, China's view on the UN has also evolved and become more flexible. China has become one of the world's strongest advocates of the UN, as it is founded on the basis of China's foundational principles of state sovereignty and universal equal representation. China actively defends the definition of legitimate war as an act that can only be approved through multilateral institutions such as the UN. One reason for China's increasingly flexible approach to the fundamental norms of the UN system is that cooperation on intervention has presented Beijing with a relatively low cost way in which to demonstrate reasonableness in its handling of foreign policy issues (Odgaard, 2012). An indicator of this shift has been China's changing patterns in the international system, its increasing flexibility on the principles of sovereignty and intervention, as well as its growing support to UN peacekeeping and peacebuilding operations. This evolution has been prompted by a number of

factors: by a growing recognition in Beijing of the value of aligning its national interests with international norms and making tangible contributions to international security, but also by China's increasing socialisation and interaction with the international community. However, the creation of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) suggests that Beijing is also comfortable with organisations which do not include Western members or norms. Lanteigne, argues that there is a possibility that China might be more tempted in the future to develop or support other organisations as a means of balancing Western power (Lanteigne, 2009).

Exporting China's Global Peace Engagement Strategy

Beijing has been engaging in a 'charm offensive' to convince the world of its peaceful status quo intentions. President Hu in the 2000s developed a 'comprehensive national strategy' or 'global peace engagement strategy' via a peaceful economic rise. The principles and goals of this strategy were conflict prevention, peace restoration, peacekeeping and post-conflict reconstruction; and linking domestic and international interests with a goal of improving its economic and political capabilities in order to create a more peaceful world in which China will grow (Lanteigne, 2009). President Hu also developed the concept of 'Harmonious World' to explain his government's foreign policy preferences. Officials and scholars in China explain 'building a harmonious world' as a new (and better) way of seeking 'lasting peace and common prosperity, whereby different civilisations can coexist in the global community' (Callahan, 2011a). Therefore, the idea of a 'harmonious world' rests on the need for harmony and justice in international affairs, the democratisation of the international system which also respects the sovereignty of large and small state; the rejection of alliances and instead the building of secured communities which reflect post-Cold War Issues, and respect for international law and institutions such as the UN (Lanteigne, 2009).

According to Lei, China's global peace engagement strategy is an integral part of China's grand strategy, conceived as part of a triangle in which domestic, regional and global policies interact in the pursuit of three overarching interests and demands: economic development to enhance domestic stability and legitimacy; promotion of a peaceful external environment free of threats to Chinese sovereignty and territorial integrity in Asia; and, cultivation of China's status and influence as a responsible great power in global politics (Lei, 2011). To this end, the global peace engagement strategy aims to maintain a peaceful external envi-

ronment to sustain China's peaceful development and portray a civilised and non-threatening country. China's strategy can be described as a low-key, long-term effort designed to persuade rather than provoke.

The key enablers to implement the Global Peace Engagement strategy are economic investment and agreements with countries, support international institutions such as the UN on peacekeeping and peacebuilding operations and increase the strategic foreign assistance by increasing Chinese foreign aid. The next section is going to explore China's emerging role in International Peacebuilding as well as on foreign aid assistance as the key component of the Global Peace Engagement Strategy.

International Peacebuilding with Chinese Characteristics

Until recently, Beijing has shown great reluctance towards multilateral missions that heavily interfere in what it considers to be the domestic and sovereign affairs of states. Today, nonetheless, international peacebuilding missions have become an area of great interest for many Chinese scholars and policy makers. Together with Peacekeeping, they see peacebuilding as a potential new area where China can play a larger role through which they can contribute to the two main pillar of their global peace engagement strategy and architecture (Lei, 2011). Although the terminology of 'peacebuilding' or 'post-conflict' does not really exist in Chinese foreign policy the approach that China has taken on international peacebuilding promotes the same goals as its 'development through peace' approach which is tackling poverty reduction through economic development. China is therefore promoting in the international system and institutions the same principles that they are trying to implement in their domestic context: because poverty leads to instability and social unrest, the longer terms of peacebuilding must be the eradication of poverty and the development of the economy. As stated by Shen Guofang, Deputy Permanent Representative to the UN:

> "Poverty leads to social instability, which will in turn be a threat to peace and security at the national and even regional levels (…). In order to uproot the causes of conflicts, we must help developing countries, especially the least-developed countries, to seek economic development, eradicate poverty, curb diseases, improve the environment and fight against social injustice."

According to Chinese analysts, the early realisation of the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of ex-combatants and the promotion of the repatriation, resettlement and the economic recovery of refugees and displaced persons should constitute the short-term objectives of peacebuilding. The long-term objectives, however, should be the eradication of poverty, development of the economy as well as 'a peaceful and rewarding life for people in the post-conflict countries and regions' (in Lei, 2011, page 353)

In 2005 President Hu publicly and officially embraced a 'comprehensive strategy featuring prevention, peace restoration, peacekeeping and post-conflict reconstruction'. Understanding the increasing complexity and evolving nature of multilateral mission, Hu noted: 'in areas emerging from conflict, ensuring the rule of law and justice should become an integral part of the overall effort to achieve peace and stability, protecting the fundamental interests of local populations and serving the overall interests of social stability' (Huang, 2011). The expression of Chinese support for the strengthening of the UN's peacebuilding capacity and 'better co-ordination and integration of all UN peacebuilding endeavours' bears witness to this trend, as does China's contribution, from 2006 to 2011, of US$4.0 million to the UN Peacebuilding Fund (Saferworld, 2012). Furthermore, publicly supporting international peacebuilding efforts is also part of the Chinese soft power strategy, as these efforts will contribute to improve China's image as an aid donor, peace contributor, and conflict mediator.

Ensuring stability within Chinese borders also influences China's support of international peacebuilding. As China shares border with some fragile states such as Myanmar, Pakistan or North Korea, conflict in these countries could impact stability in China and bring about economic and refugee problems. Moreover, as seen in the case of Xinjiang, state failure in these countries could result in China's border regions becoming havens for radical Islamic groups that could potentially link up with secession movements in the Western provinces. China's growing influence in other Asian countries such as Afghanistan, Sri Lanka or Nepal, also shapes conflict dynamics and prospects for sustainable peace. Therefore, the stabilisation of fragile states through intrusive means is acceptable to Beijing, provided it is done through multilateral institutions such as the UN or the World Bank.

Although China is becoming more supportive of international peacebuilding efforts, China advocates for an international 'Chinese peacebuilding approach' as it consistently stresses

some of the characteristics and principles of the Chinese foreign policy: respect for the right of the country concerned to make its own decisions is fundamental to post-conflict peacebuilding; the primary task of peacebuilding is to restore the administrative functions of state organs of the country; and international assistance should take into full consideration the development priorities identified independently by the country (Lei, 2011). China, therefore advocates for a context-specific approach to peacebuilding and has for instance, stated that it rejects the notion of unified standards for peacebuilding endeavours (De Carvalho and De Coning, 2013). In this sense, China does not favour the perceived Western interventionist trend, imposing a predetermined model of governance, military action, humanitarian intervention or regime change, promoting human rights or liberal forms of governance. However, China accepts that there is a need to help a country carry out political and economic restructuring, and understands that the UN needs to carry out certain administrative functions.

Chinese Foreign Aid

As the world's fastest rising power, China has sharply expanded its foreign aid spending in both scale and scope over the last decade. The terminology of foreign assistance refers to aid used to forward China's major security interests and strategic objectives. The concept of foreign aid also encompasses any form of strategic assistance and investment in foreign countries provided by the government, such as civilian and military assistance; investment in energy and natural resources; and investment in and construction of infrastructure, communication facilities, disaster relief, student scholarships, and links of industrial chains in strategically important regions (Yizhou, 2012). The Department of Foreign Aid sits under the Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM) and is responsible for administrating the foreign aid program in coordination with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Similarly to Peacebuilding, China is challenging the longstanding aid principles held by the traditional Western Aid donors and is boasting its own, distinctive humanitarian identity shaped by its own history and experience as well as its particular cultural values.

China is not a new international donor, as it has been distributing aid for over six decades, and during this time it has developed its own principles for carrying out foreign aid. The main difference with the western-liberal approach is that while the Western understanding of humanitarianism is based on the principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence, China's notion of the same has always been shaped by the Confucian principles of

responsibility and state legitimacy (Taidong, 2013). Based on the principles of economic development to reduce poverty and conflict, Chinese aid is packaged as a form of mutual economic partnership, directed towards infrastructure development as these projects seen as a prerequisite to socioeconomic development and are seen in China as integral to its own experience of development. One of the most contentious difference with Western donors, is China's commitment to a 'no strings attached' principle. While Western aid prioritises spending on good governance projects, China links aid more explicitly to economic objectives, such as securing energy resources or opening new markets for products. China also provide assistance through a broader array of financial instruments, combining concessional loans, export credits, and debt write-offs with special trade arrangements and commercial investments, often in support of infrastructure development (Stromseth, 2012; Taidong, 2013). The principle of non-interference also influences China's view on foreign aid as Western donors actively engage, participate and control development process, China does not interfere in internal affairs and allows the country to be more in control of the process.

It is very likely that China will significantly augment its foreign aid contributions in the next few years as it would continue to help achieve China's strategic objectives as aid could become a powerful tool in the expansion of China's influence. But even if China's foreign aid has grown consistently in recent years, it has far to go to reach international standards. For instance, despite some recent moves toward greater aid transparency, China still has not released specific operational and financial information regarding its overseas activities at both the country and project level (Taidong, 2013). China's aid programme has also been criticised for its infrastructure-based and state-centric approach, which tends to bypass a wider range of civil society actors; its pursuit of natural resources and for sustaining autocratic regimes and retarding progress on human rights (Krebs, 2014). However, China is still changing and adapting its foreign aid principles. For instance, currently China makes no difference between aid to conflict and non-conflict countries but is becoming more sensitive about the consequences of its assistance and the need to make sure that assistance is not being abused by recipient governments (Saferworld, 2012). Therefore, while China has taken a distinctive approach to foreign aid and humanitarian action, the country is becoming more pragmatic and accepting international norms. As part of their soft power and peace engagement strategy, China's increasing engagement with international structures, including channelling humanitarian aid through multilateral mechanisms, indicates a strong normative change in aid policy and practice.

After examining the main characteristics of the Chinese Global Peace Engagement Strategy, the following section will look at how this strategy has been implemented in recent years in Africa.

Implementing the Global Peace Engagement Strategy in Africa

In terms of international aid and economic cooperation, Africa had attracted little interest from the West since the mid-1970s and the aid they received was subject to the highly conditionality of the Washington consensus. China with its own experience of colonisation, its anti-colonial record and its status as a developing country, has developed more legitimacy and enjoys greater affinity with the African nations than does the West. However, according to US researches, China has committed $75bn on aid and development projects in Africa in the past decade which is still less than the $90bn the US committed over that period (Provost & Harris 2013). Many African states have welcomed Chinese investment as a preferable alternative to Western aid. This was reflected in a 2012 BBC poll that showed that residents of African countries where China has heavily invested tended to be much more favourable to Beijing's economic rise than those in the West: some 89 per cent of Nigerians and 75 per cent of Kenyans felt positively towards China's influence in the world, as compared with 42 per cent of Americans and 57 per cent of Britons (Chu, 2013).

Although China in general supports large infrastructure programmes, they have also started doing development, education and cultural projects as well. For instance, in Liberia, China has put millions towards the installation of solar traffic lights in Monrovia and financed a malaria prevention centre. In Mozambique, China's projects include a National School for Visual Arts in Maputo and in Algeria, construction has begun to build an opera house (Provost & Harris 2013). China has also sent thousands of doctors and teachers to work in Africa, welcomed many more students to learn in China or in Chinese language classes abroad and rolled out a continent-wide network of sports stadiums and concert halls. This contradicts the view that many analysts have that all intervention projects of China in Africa are related to the extraction of natural resources.

The positive impacts of China's intervention and aid programmes in Africa are quite visible in the continent and include: driving up both demand and prices for those African countries that are commodity exports; providing an un-conditional alternative to Western, IMF and

World Bank source of trade, aid and investment; boosting the strategic importance of Africa in the world economy; and providing an investment in infrastructural projects such as roads, railways, major public buildings etc. (Jacques, 2012a). However, China's assistance and foreign policy in Africa has also received many critiques. These mainly include claims that the Chinese approach has been primarily centred on capturing the elites and the resources under their control. Civil society groups have focussed on concerns that China is having a negative impact on local labour, trade, governance, and the environment. Also, China faces threats on several fronts such as reputational risks derived from its association with certain governments; risks to its business interests posed by weak regulatory regimes; and risks faced by its citizens operating in unstable African environments (Alden, 2014). But in fragile countries where the very nature of regime legitimacy itself is contested and the regime's ability to enforce its rule over the population and territory is limited at best, the security challenges are manifold. "Whether China likes it or not, it plays a significant role in peace and security in Africa; negatively, through its absence, and positively, through an increased partnership with African states and institutions working for peace and security" (Lyasu, in Alden 2014)

An example that illustrates both the benefits and challenges of Chinese foreign aid is that of South Sudan. Chinese commercial operations in South Sudan increased since 2005, when the Comprehensive Peace Agreement brought Sudan's long-running civil war to an end. China's strategy in South Sudan was to promote economic development as a fundamental prerequisite to solve the country's disputes with Sudan (Zhang, 2012). According to a Saferworld Report in 2013, China had approved 60 projects in a range of sectors including roads, schools, telecoms, energy, and bridges which were highly needed in the newly independent country as the World Bank estimates the annual infrastructure funding gap at $879 million a year (Saferworld, 2013). The impact of these projects has been very positive, fast-tracking the construction of roads across vast and remote locations and stimulating local economies. However, as China's companies don't get involved on local affairs and they rely on the host government for communications, there was very limited consultation with the local community which meant that many of the projects did not target community needs and failed to succeed (Saferworld, 2013). This also generated local grievance and fuelled security incidents against Chinese companies and citizens as the local population perceived that China had not sufficiently helped the communities.

In terms of Chinese contributions to peacebuilding in Africa, Chinese foreign policy has been more ad hoc. Although in official statements the Chinese government has declared that China will promote conflict resolution through negotiations by stating 'China calls for settling disputes and conflicts through talks and consultation and by seeking common ground while putting aside differences' (Saferworld, 2012), its capacity to act as a conflict manager has been limited to areas where Chinese's interests were at risk. For instance, China played the role of mediator, in pushing partner regimes into talks in Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in the case of Libya China voted for the imposition of sanctions on Muammar Qaddafi's regime and the referral of the conflict to the International Criminal Court (Richmond and Tellidis, 2014).

The most marked change in the Chinese attitude towards its commitment to peace initiatives in Africa has been seen in the case of the conflict of Darfur, Sudan. China has traditionally been an ally of diplomatically-isolated Sudan. Despite its official rhetoric supporting Sudan's territorial integrity, and the consent of the Sudanese government prior to the deployment of any UN peacekeeping mission, Chinese diplomats put immense pressure on Sudanese president Omar Al-Bashir to accept these deployments. The approaches that China used in the Darfur issue-resolution were political dialogue, consultation and diplomatic means instead of the use of sanctions and other forms of unilateral action (Jian, 2012). The involvement of China in the Sudan conflict demonstrated that China had entered a new stage and was ready to start using its influence for peacebuilding purposes. The intervention triggered an important debate in China with analysts arguing that China should not maintain an uncritical embrace of such an autocratic and corrupt regime that has committed atrocious crimes against humanity and genocide in Darfur (Saferworld, 2011).

The examples of Sudan and South Sudan show that China is beginning to be more sensitive to the complexities of regional conflict in Africa and the needs of the local population. Overall, China's approach to economic development has been welcomed across the continent and provided benefits, such as infrastructure, jobs and services, that may be more sustainable and transformative than western aid.

An evolving foreign policy and strategy

China has a unique foreign policy and principles that influences the way the country interacts with other countries and international organisations. However, as China's influence grows

and as the country feels more comfortable in the international system, China's views and policies on foreign policy will evolve and adapt. This is clearly reflected on the evolution of the Chinese foreign policy from a limited engagement with the outside world, to a limited foreign policy based on the principles of non-interference and respect to mutual sovereignty and to a more interventionists approach of 'creative involvement'. As seen in the example of international peacebuilding and foreign aid, China is also trying to export its own distinctive model and become more of a 'norm maker' than it has been in the past. Because of the different kind of political tradition, its history and post-colonial society, the Communist regime with its unique characteristics (an authoritarian Confucian state rather than a democratic system) and sophisticated statecraft, China will act as an alternative model to the West and will export these characteristics to the rest of the world. But as examined through the Global Peace Engagement Strategy that China is promoting, the Chinese model and approach also has its challenges when implemented as discussed in the Africa example. The next chapter will consider an example of 'creative involvement' of Chinese foreign policy in its neighbour country of Myanmar.

Chapter Five: China's role in the conflict in Kachin, Myanmar[1]

The blind person never fears ghosts

Burmese proverb

Myanmar has been publicly acknowledged as problematic by Chinese leaders and is seen by the wider world as a regional challenge which Beijing should take the lead on. Since its separation from the British Empire, Myanmar (formally known as Burma), has been in constant conflict. Several ethnic armed groups have taken up arms against the government demanding equal political, social, and economic rights. One of the country's longest insurgencies – and one of the longest in the world – has been in Kachin State, which has been the site of many brutal military offences since the 1960s. Through rebel groups and local community organisations, the Kachin people have been pushing back against what they see as the government's exploitative economic plans. When tensions along the China-Myanmar border escalated to threaten China's border security in late 2012 and early 2013, China stepped up and got involved in the conflict, mediating between the government and the ethnic groups which changed its policy of non-interference as the country openly hosted and mediated the Kachin peace talks.

In order to look at this case study more comprehensively, this chapter is going to first look at China's neighbourhood policy in Asia and its policy in Myanmar in order to provide a broader background to the context in the country. The root causes of the Kachin conflict will be analysed as well as the role of China in the peace talks. China's interests in the region will also be examined as they explain some of the reasons why China took such a decisive stand and played a pivotal role in this conflict, moving away from non-intervention into a very active conflict mediator role.

[1] In 1989 the then military government changed the official name from Burma to Myanmar. This research will use the name Myanmar as is mostly used within the country and is in line with the practice of the UN and most countries outside North America and Europe. This is not a political statement or judgment on the right of the military regime to change the name of the country.

China's Neighbourhood Diplomacy

During much of the 1990s, and especially after the 1997 Asian financial crisis, Beijing decided to become far more proactive on its periphery and started engaging in improving its Asian relations, settling border and other disputes, and seeking to establish itself as a rising power more interested in regional cooperation than competition. It developed 'China's Good Neighbour Policy' characterised by its willingness to accommodate the interests of its neighbours and make compromises in order to build trust and increase Chinese influence. According to Lanteigne the reasons for this strategy were to halt any attempt by China's neighbours (especially those more aligned with the West) to restrain and contain China's growing power; to convince its smaller neighbours that it was not seeking a hegemonic role in Asia but was interested in becoming an indispensable partner and potential alternative to American-led Western power; and to create a stable peaceful periphery to allow China to concentrate on its internal reforms (Lanteigne, 2009).

So far Beijing has been successful in achieving its primary goals. It has resolved many border disputes with its neighbours (with the exceptions of Japan, Vietnam and India where tensions remain) and has adopted a more conservative, diplomatic approach to addressing inter-state differences that has improved and stabilised relations all around its periphery. On the economic front, China's development has already benefited all of its neighbours. In 2014, China was the largest trading nation and a net capital exporter of outbound direct investment (Godement, 2015). As China's trade and investment are mostly concentrated in Asia, these countries were the biggest beneficiaries. For instance, China started the so-called 'Silk Roads project' which aim at promoting economic development in neighbouring countries so as to better share China's economic gains. For China, these projects will also benefit the country, as the wealthier the countries around China, the more sustainable China's development will be.

In South Asia, China is becoming a key actor in conflict affected states. China's policy in the region is driven by several factors, including its geostrategic rivalry with India, prioritisation of regime stability and economic expansion and natural resource requirements. In Pakistan, China is deeply concerned about insurgence particularly the support and training provided to Uighur separatists groups in Xinjiang and has provided significant counter-insurgence assistance to the Pakistan government. However, Beijing's military assistance (both hardware and nuclear technology) has fuelled the tensions between Islamabad and Delhi.

China's previous policies in Afghanistan make Beijing a key actor to support peace and stability in the country. China's investment in Afghanistan has the potential to stimulate growth and development and reduce fragility in the country, and its low profile and non-interference stance in the past means that its viewed as a neutral party by most Afghan actors (Castillejo, 2013). Getting involved in the Afghanistan conflict poses a high number of risks to China, including threatening its economic and security interests in the region. However, Beijing seems eager to take these risks as it has recently engaged and supported the Pakistan-led efforts in the Afghanistan peace process. This makes Beijing a key stake-holder in the Central Asia region, an actor expected to play a greater role in regional security efforts.

China's influence in the Asia region has also expanded but is not only driving from its hard economic power, but also in ways associated with soft power. For instance, in terms of higher education, training future generations of intellectuals, technicians, and political elites from other nations is a subtle but very important form of soft power. During the 2003 academic year, there were 77,628 foreign students studying for advanced degrees in China's universities (approximately 80 per cent of which came from other Asian countries). That number grew to 377.000 in 2014 (source: Chinese Ministry of Education). China is also influencing the region through its 'new security concept' or 'strategic partnerships' that attempt a new set of norms to govern interstate relations and prevent conflict, which resonates positively among many Asian nations and Asian institutions (Shambaugh, 2005). This is particularly the case in ASEAN, where China's initiatives link very closely with ASEAN's own norms and principles over respect of sovereignty articulated over many years. Another example is the promotion of conflict prevention as opposed to military intervention in the region. Chinese current national security strategy focuses on limiting the possibilities of violent conflict in its borders and this strategy recognises that dialogue and the power of example have important roles to play in helping to prevent the negative consequences of power politics and the use of force (Odgaard, 2012). The application of China's coexistence strategy to its border disputes has been an effective way of demonstrating the sincerity of these principles. For instance, China is seen as the country with the highest degree of influence over North Korea and has repeatedly called for calm on the Korean peninsula, as tensions between the two Koreans have risen. A Chinese official was quoted as saying: "We will carry on this tradition… boost strategic communication and coordination on key international issues and work for peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula" (BBC News Asia, 2012). However,

the recent territorial disputes in the South China Sea have become a particular source of contention with a number of South-East Asian countries looking at the US for political support against China.

China's Myanmar Policy

The 2000 kilometres border that separates southwest China from eastern Myanmar ensures that both countries have had significant relations for a long time, even if they had different traditions and religious (Myanmar is Theravada Buddhist country whereas China is a Confucian one). However, Myanmar's traditional ties with China were cut off by the British during the colonisation in the 1880s. But the decision by the British Colonial administration to administer Burma from New Delhi led to much bitterness amongst the Burmese and after the independence, the nationalists Burmese elites rejected membership in the British Commonwealth and forged a non-aligned stand ruled by an oppressive military junta since 1962. Once Myanmar secured independence from Britain and China made its revolution, formal state-to-state ties developed and Myanmar was the first non-communist country to recognise the People's Republic of China in 1949. Despite these formal ties, Myanmar sought only limited alignment with China, focusing primarily on diplomatic support and protection, with only a moderate record of bilateral defence and security cooperation (Gungwu, 2005). However, bilateral relations were not very positive between the two countries as China chose to support the rebel Communist Party of Burma in the 1950s. During the Cultural Revolution, the relationship became very intense during the anti-Chinese riots in 1967 in Yangon, which marked a period of mutual hostility (Holliday, 2009). It was only after the beginning of the economic reforms of Deng Xiaoping in the early 1980s that the leaders of Myanmar began to build up a new level of trust with China, finding themselves on the same page on many questions. In defiance of much Western opinion, but in conformity with most Asian thought, they particularly agreed that the core principle of national sovereignty trumped almost any other in the international arena, and that matters like democracy protests and treatment of ethnic minorities were strictly domestic concern (Holliday, 2009). Through trade, investment and large-scale infrastructure projects undertaken by major Chinese state-owned enterprises (SOEs) to build dams and transport natural resources such as the future oil and gas pipelines traversing Myanmar, the two countries worked together closer than ever. China was one of the largest investor in Myanmar and Chinese SOEs were heavily investing in Myanmar's natural resource sector.

During the time of the military junta regime, Myanmar was politically isolated from the rest of the world and there was pressure and criticism on China because of its close ties with the military regime. However, Tokyo was the largest provider of overseas development assistance to Myanmar, with net disbursements of $30.9 million in 2006 (Odgaard, 2012), but Japan received no international criticism for its support to the Myanmar regime. The pressure on China to intervene and use its influence in Myanmar was clearly reflected during the Saffron revolution in late 2007 when the country's military government ordered a crackdown against anti-government demonstrations led by Buddhist monks, prompting an international outcry and placing Beijing in a difficult position. As China was one of the few countries with close ties to Myanmar, Beijing was prompted by the international community to influence Yangon to take a softer line. At first, Beijing kept with its traditional views on non-intervention but later called upon the government to settle the dispute in a more peaceful manner. This support for the military government reflected China's interest in Myanmar's political stability, including border security, the safety of Chinese investments, and the agreement for the construction and future operation of dual gas and oil pipelines from the Bay of Bengal to Yunnan.

The process of reform in Myanmar started in November 2010, when military rule was replaced by a new military-backed civilian government. Some analysts believe that it was ASEAN policy of continuous and constructive engagement with Myanmar rather than the economic sanctions and political isolation promoted by the Wes that impacted the opening up. Through a gradual and persistent exposure to a variety of areas (economic, health care, education etc.), Myanmar government officials saw how other ASEAN countries had moved ahead introducing new norms. Moreover, ASEAN's decision to let Myanmar chair the regional organisation was done to encourage Myanmar to pursue political reform (Mahbubani, 2013). The US and the EU started to ease sanction and restrictions to Myanmar while the country started progress towards democracy and economic reforms. With the US keen to deepen its warming ties with Myanmar, Chinese leaders called for strengthening strategic trust between the two countries, as well as improved coordination and cooperation, reiterating China's interest in a 'peaceful, stable, independent and prosperous Myanmar' (Haacke, 2012). However, the US was also determined to re-establish relations with Myanmar as part of Obama's administration policy focus on Asia. The US stated that its policy towards Myanmar is pragmatic and is fundamentally about supporting democracy and human rights as well as stability and greater prosperity in Myanmar (Haacke, 2012). However, many analysts

believe that these developments are about encircling China and countering its emerging role in the Asia region.

Background to the Kachin Conflict

Myanmar is one of the world's most diverse countries. Its seven states and seven regions are largely separated on ethnic grounds, with the country's ethnic nationalities located primarily in natural resource rich states forming a periphery around the Burman majority lowland region that represents roughly 60 per cent of the population. The Kachin people are predominantly a Christian ethnic minority living mainly in Kachin state, with smaller pockets throughout the country and in border regions of China and India.

The conflict between the people of Kachin and the Myanmar Government is one of the longest ethnic conflicts in the world. It dates back to the British colonisation period where central Myanmar was under direct administrative authority of the British empire while areas along the border were mostly left under the authority of their own chiefs. Ethnic groups in these borderlands were never fully controlled by a central state, and therefore they remained distinct from the majority Burman population in their cultures, traditions, languages, economies, and politics. During this time, many ethnic groups, like the Kachin, converted to Christianity while the majority population remained Buddhist.

World War II increased the divide between ethnic groups and the Burmans and created further tensions as ethnic groups and the majority Burman population found themselves fighting each other supporting different sides. After the end of World War II, the Panglong Conference in 1947 was an attempt to unite the country as the "Independent Union of Burma". Many representatives for ethnic states, such as Kachin, Shan, and Chin States, agreed to this Union as long as they could have political autonomy within their states and share the country's wealth. When the border ethnic states were not awarded the political autonomy they were promised after the country's independence, ethnic rebellions began to simmer and tensions between the majority and the minorities group increased.

Although the Kachin were initially supportive of the central government when other ethnic groups began to rebel, they too rebelled in the late 1950s and early 1960s, along with Chin and Shan ethnic groups, when they felt the interests of ethnic minorities were being ignored.

The Kachin Independence Organisation (KIO) was established in 1961 to support the creation of an independent Kachin after frustrations from the unfulfilled Panglong Agreement and to address and support the civilian population suffering from the fighting. Tensions increased with the military coup in 1962, which was followed by increased frustration among ethnic groups and fighting between the military regime and ethnic minorities. Fighting between the KIO and the Myanmar government continued for decades and outlasted conflicts between the government and other armed ethnic groups with allegations of systematic use of torture by local human rights groups of Myanmar authorities against Kachin civilians (Fortify Rights, 2014).

Root Causes of the Conflict

Historically, the Kachin people were never controlled by a central government, and they remained distinct in their culture and language as a result. The Panglong Conference in 1947 was an attempt to bring the country together as the Union of Burma, and the Kachin, along with other ethnic minorities, participated only under the premise that they would have full political autonomy in their state(s). When the constitution went into effect the following year, the autonomy and power given to ethnic states was inconsistent with what they had wanted, ethnic rebellions began to form after rising tensions. Since then, the legitimacy and popularity has dramatically expanded in the ethnic regions to the point that currently, the KIO acts as a defacto government in KIO controlled areas and have their own officials and institutions which are parallel to those of the central Myanmar government.

Many ethnic minorities, including the Kachin, feel that the central government is ignoring the interests of ethnic groups especially around access to education in their own language, freedom of religion and autonomy from the central government. Land acquisitions for development projects are also causing widespread social, economic, and political instability. Kachin is rich in natural resources such as jade, gold, and timber, and there has long been a struggle over these resources. Foreign investors are coming to the country creating in some cases additional grievances related to extractive industries as the economic benefits are not reaching the grassroots level of society. China is one of the major investors in the Kachin province and trans-shipment of oil and access to Myanmar's natural gas reserves are among China's foremost interests in the country. In 2010, China National Petroleum Company began the construction of a major oil and gas pipelines from Sittwe in Myanmar to Kunming,

the capital of the Yunan province. Myanmar's hydropower resources are also a target for investment because they offer an abundant source of inexpensive energy close to the border that can be used to satisfy the growing Chinese demand (ICG, 2010). In addition, new land investment laws in Myanmar benefit large investors as opposed to small farmers, especially in ethnic minority regions, and they do not take into account land rights of ethnic communities (Transnational Institute, 2013). One natural resource that is prevalent in Kachin and contributes to the region's instability is opium/poppy, which has increased in cultivation, production, and trade. According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (Source: UNODC), Myanmar produces 25% of the world's estimated opium, and Kachin and Shan States have the most poppy growing areas in the country. Poppy cultivation in Myanmar increased by 17% in 2012 alone, despite the government's eradication claims. Most of the heroin produced is destined for the illicit Chinese market, in response to which China has initiated opium substitution programmes in Northern Myanmar and Laos (Transnational Institute, 2014). All the armed groups in the regions received pressure (especially from China) to impose opium bans. Despite these efforts and other Myanmar's government political reforms on the eradication of poppy cultivation, the major cause of the increases of drug production has been attributed to the ongoing instability and conflict (Burma News International, 2014)

Attempted peace negotiations in Kachin

There have been several attempts to end hostilities in Kachin. The 1994 Ceasefire Agreement between the KIO and the Myanmar government ended decades of fighting, but the political desires and ethnic grievances of the Kachin and ethnic populations were not addressed, and therefore the ceasefire was not conducive to sustainable peace. The text of the ceasefire agreement was short; it mentioned peace between KIO and government troops, the establishment of liaison offices to promote communication, and future development and economic improvements in Kachin. The political dialogue and autonomy that the KIO desired was not achieved through this ceasefire, and tensions with the government continued as a result.

The KIO participated in the National Convention process that resulted in the drafting of the 2008 constitution. This process was deeply flawed, and while the KIO participated, they were given no substantive input, no political dialogue, and the grievances of ethnic minorities

were still not discussed (ICG, 2013b). After the KIO rejected the government's demand of transitioning into border guard units, the government denied the registration of Kachin representatives for the upcoming elections in 2010. The Myanmar government then declared the ceasefire 'null and void', ordered the closure of KIO liaison offices, applied economic pressure by blocking KIO trading routes, and began referring to the organisation as 'insurgents' in the state media (ICG, 2013b). The fighting resumed in June 2011 with regular clashes in several parts of Kachin and the Northern Shan states with allegations of serious human rights abuses and violations of international humanitarian law that left 100.000 internally displaced persons in government and KIO controlled areas (Source: UNOCHA).

Peace talks began following the resumption of fighting in 2011, first at a local level and then at a national level. From the beginning of these talks, the KIO indicated that it would not sign another ceasefire without the presence of neutral witnesses and a promise from the government for political dialogue. After multiple failed talks due to mistrust, disagreements and continued fighting, pressure and an intervention from China ultimately resulted in a seven-point agreement in May 2013 where the UN and China acted as international observers. This seven-point peace agreement included plans to continue a political dialogue; work towards de-escalation of hostilities; create joint monitoring systems and committees; address the needs of relief, rehabilitation, and resettlement of internally displaced persons; continue talks on the repositioning of troops; establish a KIO technical team in Kachin; and continue peace talks with the same group of observers (Ivanov, 2014). While this peace agreement might have been a positive step forward, there has been no political settlement or ceasefire since, and the fighting and clashes have continued to occur.

The 2015 nation-wide Ceasefire Agreement

In his inaugural speech in March 2011, President Thein Sein made a surprise announcement and declared that his top priority was to build national unity and address decades of armed conflict by starting a process of national dialogue. The process started as a nation-wide ceasefire agreement aiming to bring in all armed groups (including those that had already signed ceasefires) but it rapidly expanded from a national ceasefire to a much broader political dialogue on the future of the country that included all relevant stakeholders: armed groups, political parties and civil society (Yawnghwe, 2014).

The peace process in Myanmar has been domestically driven, driving in the first instance by government initiative, rather than resulting from international pressure. This has resulted in a limited role for the international community in the process. The peace process is highly complex with more than twenty parallel discussions underway between the government and the various ethnic armed groups. However, a small circle of reformers within government has worked with ethnic armed groups and civil society to press for transition and concrete reform. The Myanmar Peace Centre (MPC) was established in 2012 to assist and coordinate the peace efforts by the government. In 2014, the Myanmar Peace Centre hosted discussions with representatives of the ethnic armed groups. The group agreed to reconvene with drafts of a ceasefire agreement that would include background, aims and goals, ceasefire matters, ways/means for a lasting ceasefire, political dialogue guarantees, ongoing work, and general matters.

Despite these efforts, it seems that the different parties and stakeholders of the conflict still have some differences. In the last 25 years, ethnic leaders have been persuaded that independence is not an option and have generally accepted the idea of a federal union with equal power and autonomy (Yawnghwe, 2014). However, while the government is signing agreements and making commitments, it does not seem to be able to control the Tatmadaw (the Military Armed forces) and serious ceasefire violations continue. Moreover, the ethnic nationalists want political settlement, not economic privileges, and have rejected the notion of surrendering their arms without a guarantee that their grievances would be heard favourably in a parliament that is more than 95 per cent controlled by the government (Ivanov, 2014).

After many talks with the armed groups, the government finally signed a final version of the National Ceasefire Agreement on the 15th of October 2015, less than a month before the general elections. But seven out of the initial fifteen ethnic armed groups refused to sign the ceasefire agreement, including the largest ethnic armed groups: The Kachin Independence Army, the Shan State Army and the United Wa State Army. Although this has been praised by the UN and Western Embassies as a ‘historical step towards achieving peace and national reconciliation' (US Embassy in Yangon) it seems like durable solutions and lasting peace in Kachin state still remains elusive.

China’s role in the Kachin Conflict

Since the fighting in Kachin resumed in 2011, China has been heavily involved in finding a resolution for the conflict. Worried about border stability when stray shells landed across the border and security of its major investment projects in the area, China decided to become more proactive in the conflict. China issued an unusually strongly-worded statement expressing ‘strong concern and dissatisfaction with the situation, and demanding that Myanmar urgently investigate and adopt a series of measures to prevent further similar occurrences’, China went on to call on ‘both sides involved in the conflict in Myanmar to immediately implement a ceasefire and jointly protect the peace and stability of the China-Myanmar border area’ (ICG, 2013b). A high-level Chinese delegation met with President Thein Sein to discuss border stability, where China put considerable pressure on Myanmar to end the fighting and find a peaceful solution, while also committing to use its influence on the KIO to do the same. But it was a solid intervention from China that brought the Myanmar national government and the Kachin Independence Organisation back together to the negotiating table in February 2013, out of which the seven-point agreement was signed, referencing longstanding demands of the KIO on the need for force separation, a monitoring and verification mechanism, and a dialogue on political issues (ICG, 2013b).

China’s intervention in 2013 was firmer, bolder and more public than any other previous involvement in the conflict. China’s role in the process was central and instrumental in arranging the dialogue between the two parties. As fighting raged with the KIO along the Kachin state border, this caused China to appoint a special envoy, Wang Yingfan, in March 2013 to try and hammer out a new ceasefire deal. Due to the lack of trust between the KIO and the Myanmar government, both preferred a third party location. China not only provided the venue, but also explicitly guaranteed the security of all the participants. However, China purposely excluded the US and the UK from taking part in the talks. On the substance of the talks, China played a quiet, behind-the-scenes role of coordinating and mediating under the guidelines of ‘persuading for peace and promoting dialogue’ (Sun, 2013). A Chinese expert on Myanmar's northern affairs commented publicly that China ‘carefully listened to the demands and conditions of both sides and actively mediated between them’ (Sun, 2013).

China had never before played such a public role in an internal conflict between the central government and a local rebel group of another sovereign nation. Some analysts in Washington have expressed recognition and appreciation of China's stepping up to assume its ‘big power responsibility’ in maintaining regional peace and stability (Sun, 2013). China had refused to play such an active role in the past, fearing it would be perceived by the Myanmar

government as interference in its internal affairs. But it was not the first time that the country had used its influence and power to stop the hostilities in Kachin. In 2010, when tensions peaked between the government and the KIO, many analysts cited Beijing's mediation and pressures as a key factor in ensuring that tensions did not boil over (ICG, 2013b). But on this occasion, pressure was exerted more discreetly through the expression of private concerns and pressure on both sides.

The Chinese Dilemma - Relationship with the armed forces

China managed to play such a critical role on the Kachin conflict because of the relationship the country has with both the Myanmar government and the ethnic groups and armed groups such as the KIO. In most parts of Kachin, the Myanmar state is not present or is only represented by the Tatmadaw, which for local populations is experienced as a violent and non-legitimate force. Parallel ethnic administrations often enjoy considerably more local recognition and support than those of the government, and in many areas the only existing services are delivered by non-state actors, including community based organisations associated with armed groups. In the case of Kachin, the KIO has set up a parallel administration with a parallel government and institutions such as health, education etc. which are the de facto administration in all the non-government controlled areas in Kachin. Because of the relationship and legitimacy with the communities, these non-state actors are critical stakeholders in the Kachin conflict.

China has relationships with many armed groups and non-state actors in Myanmar that operate close to their border, such as the United Wa State Army (UWSA) or the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA). In the case of Kachin, China has had ties with both parties and has been supporting them for decades. For instance, the KIO rented a Casino area for 35 years to China who has their own private security forces in the area (called the Economic Zone Security Forces). China also trades with the KIO timber and natural resources which makes China one of the main sources of funding for the KIO (interviews in Myanmar). Because of this relationship with the KIO, China is perceived by the Kachin and Northern Shan communities as a key actor in the conflict. Local communities think that China has enough leverage on both sides to stop the conflict and establish peace but also China's involvement and support to both sides is prolonging the conflict and could

be an obstacle to peace (Interviews and Save the Children assessment conducted in Myanmar).

Myanmar is a case study for the relationship of China with non-government actors. China is increasingly finding itself at odds with non-governmental actors and is being forced to realise that its focus on strictly inter-governmental relations while ignoring the needs and interests of ethnic nationalities, no longer serves its interest (Berger, 2013). Among Myanmar's military, the relationships of the non-government groups with various Chinese authorities led to the perception that the Beijing 'maintains a balance of power between border ethnic groups and the military government to ensure that neither side gains the upper hand' (ICG, 2009). Chinese analysts have suggested that Myanmar's military worried that China would be able to draw on its contacts with the armed ethnic nationalities to cause problems should bilateral relations deteriorate, even if China's official position is that the central government does not maintain formal relations or official contacts with any armed militias in Myanmar and that that there is no formal recognition, military support, exchanges or economic assistance to these groups (Berger, 2013). Nevertheless, the reality is that three of the largest armed groups (KIO, UWSA and MNDAA) have closer ties with China than with Myanmar central government. As the current October 2015 Nation Ceasefire Agreement does not include any of these groups, it is very likely that China will continue to play a decisive role in the peace process.

Conflict in Kokang - another intervention from China

Kokang is another self-administer region in Myanmar located in the northern part of the Shan state, and as Kachin, also bordering China. Kokang is mostly populated by Kokang or Kokangese people, an ethnic Han Chinese group whose linga franca is Chinese. The region was part of China for several centuries until the Qing dynasty ceded it to Britain after the British conquest of Upper Burma in 1885. Kokang was initially placed in China under the 1894 Sino-British boundary convention but it was ceded to British Burma in a supplementary agreement signed in February 1897. Since becoming part of Myanmar and because of its strategic location, the region has formed a buffer between the Chinese Yunnan province and the Myanmar Shan States. For these reasons, the region has had strong social and economic connections with neighbouring China. Currently in Kokang, the main currency is the Chinese Yuan, some Kokangense have Chinese identity cards and there are many migrant workers from China. From the 1960s to 1989 the Communist Party of Burma ruled the

area, and after the dissolution of that party in 1989 it became a special region of Myanmar under the control of the Myanmar Nationalities Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA). Tensions between the MNDAA and the Myanmar government have been recurrent since the 1960s and resulted in deadly offensives in 2009 and 2015. In both cases, refugees fled into the Chinese Yunan province.

In February 2015 the fighting started when troops led by the veteran Kokang leader Pheung Kya-shin resurfaced in the Kokang region and attacked government and army positions after an interval of nearly six years. Fighting spilled across the border into China, killing five Chinese citizens in a miss targeted airstrike by the Myanmar air force. The Kokang conflict in 2015 displaced over 80,000 people most of whom fled across the border to China (source UNOCHA, 2015). As in Kachin, it was again a firm intervention and pressure from Beijing what prompted both sides to announced a unilateral ceasefire in June 2015 after four months of intensive fighting (ICG, 2015). The MNDAA issued a statement in which they acknowledge that 'the Chinese government's strong calls for restoring peace in the China-Myanmar border region were one of the reasons for the decision' (Mclaughlin & Zaw 2015).

Similarly to Kachin, the Chinese authorities have always maintained good relations with the MNDAA and other nationality forces in the northeast borderlands which provided China with strong leverage to influence both parties to the negotiating table when the fighting broke out. The Kokang crisis led China's government to embark on a two-track strategy to try and bring peace and stability to its borderlands. On the one hand, the People's Liberation Army troops were deployed to the border of the Yunnan province in order to ensure that the fighting will not spill inside China. On the other hand, China called on the government of President Thein Sein to solve the crisis through negotiations and Chinese officials also stepped up the support to the nationwide ceasefire talks in Myanmar and arranged an unusual ethnic summit in the Wa ethnic territory between the Myanmar government and several ethnic groups. Chinese officials were discreet about their presence, but participants recognised that the summit would not have been able to go ahead without the official blessing from China. According to an ethnic group leader who attended the summit: 'China gave the green light, and facilitated travel to the meeting for some of the delegates' (Transnational Institute, 2015). This meeting also reinforced the argument that the reality is that China, rather than the central government in Myanmar, has always been the most important presence for many inhabitants of the Kachin, Shan and Wa borderlands since independence in 1948. The Kokang

conflict also shows that Beijing can be flexible on government-to-government relations and that it can use its influence with ethnic armed groups and bring them to the negotiation table. Moreover, Beijing hosted the leader of the Myanmar opposition party, Aung San Suu Kyi, in June 2015 to discuss the peace process in the country. During the visit, China drew attention to its role in peace efforts by stating that: 'We hope that the conflicting parties meet each other halfway, exercise restraint, stop the war as soon as possible and restore normal order in the China-Myanmar border area' that China supports 'early realisation of peace and national reconciliation'; and that 'China has actively promoted the peace process in northern Myanmar, (and) played a constructive role in accordance with the wishes of Myanmar and has been welcomed by Myanmar' (Mclaughlin & Zaw 2015).

More than Creative Involvement? Reasons for intervention

China's intervention in the Kachin and Kokang conflict disputes China's traditional non-interference on domestic affairs principle and represents an example of a 'creative involvement' intervention. The interventions had the characteristics that Yizhou proposed: it had the consent from both sides of the conflict and significant Chinese interests were at stake. Furthermore, the interests at risk were broader than just purely economic benefits and they include the following:

Economic Interest: Kachin is an area rich in natural resources (gold, silver, copper, jade etc.) and it is also an area of heavy Chinese investment as it represents an energy corridor from the Indian Ocean port of Kyaukpyu. Also, China needs Kachin for economic growth in the border province of Yunnan. From China's perspective, the persistence of the Kachin conflict threatens the security and profitability of Chinese investments in the region. Its investments there include several hydropower projects in the area (some of which had to be suspended due to the ongoing conflict) and at least $2 billion spent on oil and gas pipelines crossing Myanmar into Yunnan (Economist, 2012). The energy corridor consists of twin pipelines to import natural gas and crude oil which are crucial for meeting Yunnan's growing energy needs, and critical for China's broader energy security, by providing an alternative route to the congested and strategically vulnerable Straits of Malacca (ICG, 2013b). These pipelines pass close to KIO-held areas in northern Shan State where armed clashes have frequently occurred.

Addressing Anti-Chinese Sentiment: Popular perceptions in Myanmar are that China had long colluded with the former military regime, providing political backing while exploiting Myanmar's natural resources. In recent years China's growing economic ties with Kachin have benefited some of the state's inhabitants, but are also seen by some as exploitative. As such, China does not want to fuel such resentment by siding too closely with the Burmese army in its fight against the KIO (Economist, 2012). Moreover, some of the investment projects are unpopular with the local communities as there was no consultation with the affected population (agreements were made with the Myanmar government only) which has created further resentment towards China. China is addressing its unpopularity in Myanmar by promoting mutual understanding and cooperation between the people of the two countries. By intervening in the different ethnic conflicts, China can also demonstrate its peaceful intentions with the local population.

Border stability and nationalistic pressure: both the Kachin and the Kokang conflicts have imposed tremendous pressure along China's border. The recurrent escalation of tensions has led to Burmese artillery shells exploding inside China resulting in economic disruption, political disturbances and rising dissatisfaction regarding Myanmar's careless military actions among Chinese citizens (Sun, 2013). In addition, thousands of refugees have fled into China (i.e. at least 40.000 refugees from the Kokang region fled into China in 2009 and 80.000 in 2015) and there is a potential for even larger influx should the situation deteriorate. This poses a dilemma to the Chinese authorities, as it also wants to keep on good terms with the Kachin and other ethnic minorities, who share ethnicity with groups on the Chinese side of the border. As Beijing strives to maintain a stable border, there has been mounting domestic pressure for authorities to take action and press for a ceasefire. The conflict was also widely reported in the Chinese press and on social media, generating public sympathy and support for fellow Chinese in the Kokang region. The Chinese public have expressed unhappiness with some of Myanmar's actions towards China, including the cancellation of the dam infrastructure project, refugee flows, and the stray shells landing in China. There were also small protests by Chinese Kachin demanding that Beijing put pressure on Myanmar to end its offensive (ICG, 2013b). All of these factors combined created pressure on the Chinese government to adopt a stronger stance.

Geostrategic rivalry: China's decision to step up its intervention in the conflict could have also been partially motivated by a potential US role. Some observers have noted that the

shift in China's approach came shortly after the U.S. ambassador to Myanmar visited Kachin State in December 2012 (ICG, 2013b), along with rumours that the U.S. might be intending to play a mediation role (which could potentially insert a US presence right along China's border). Given the geostrategic rivalry between the U.S. and China in the region, the prospect of Washington becoming involved in an issue on China's border may have galvanised a more proactive response from Beijing.

Some of these interests are conflicting with each other, resulting in China's inconsistent policy towards the Kachin peace process. However, all of these factors might have informed China's decision to intervene so assertively in the conflict.

Moving from a non-intervention approach

Although the official rhetoric remains consistent in relation to China's standpoint on foreign affairs and intervention, the more complex and multifaceted China's international relations become, the more stretched these principles appear in practice. Beijing is finding increasingly hard to reconcile its global economic expansionism, which entails protecting Chinese economic interests overseas, with a non-interventionist foreign and security policy. The intervention of China in Myanmar represents an example of this evolution and a divergence from Chinese foreign policy's traditional non-interference principles. It shows that as China's national interests expand and diversify, so too will its foreign policy principles. It also represents an example of a 'creative involvement' intervention. As long as the intervention has the consent from both sides of a conflict in the host country and China has significant interests at stake, Beijing seems to be willing to demonstrate some flexibility, to experiment and to adapt. It has also positioned China openly as a mediator and a tacit guarantor of any agreement reached between the parties, which evidence its intentions as an emerging responsible power. The last chapter is going to examine how China can use all the knowledge and experience acquired through these interventions into the redefinition of peacebuilding.

Chapter Six: Same objective, different approaches: Opportunities for Peacebuilding

‘The asking of questions itself is the correct rite’

Confucius, The Analects

China has demonstrated in Myanmar a more flexible interpretation of its policy of non-interference and that it is ready to engage more proactively in conflict affected states. The Sudan, Xinjiang and Myanmar examples have shown that whether it is unintended or not, China’s investments and policies in conflict-affected countries have an impact on the conflict dynamics of the countries. The leverage that China has with governments (and armed groups as in the case of Myanmar) in these countries, through its economic investment, also makes China a key stakeholder in any conflict. Therefore, China’s engagement has altered the context in which international efforts to build peace and stability take place and its involvement can either support or undermine the peacebuilding influence of western donors in conflict-affected states.

Western states value China’s contribution to peacebuilding and hope it will take more responsibility, but simultaneously they also have suspicions about China’s growing power and intentions. As previously discussed, China is becoming a key peacebuilding actor in the international arena because of its considerable political leverage and influence in many conflict-affected states. Also, Beijing is demonstrating a notable growing interest in peacebuilding demonstrated in the evolution of Chinese foreign policy from a reluctance to get so involved in what it saw as domestic affairs to intervening in certain countries and increasing their support to international peacekeeping and peacebuilding missions. This evolution is part of China’s global peace engagement strategy but Beijing seems to be cautious with its approach as a new member of the international world order. On the one hand, China knows that being inactive on the world stage could be defined as ‘irresponsible’, but being too active could also regarded as ‘irresponsible’ because some analysts (mainly Western) are wary of China’s intentions and are unfamiliar with China’s growing contribution to peacebuilding. To avoid being perceived as a threat, in many cases, China has decided to keep a low profile and avoid taking a leadership position.

But as all the case studies have demonstrated, China has the potential to play a larger role in consolidating peace and to bring stability to conflict affected contexts and for these reasons, China can and should become an international actor in peacebuilding efforts. However, China's views on peacebuilding bring a different and distinctive perspective, one that focuses more on economic development rather than in building a liberal state and a civil society which contrasts with the Western approach. But the differences on approach should not prevent China from being part of the debate moving forward to re-define peacebuilding. This does not necessarily mean China should adopt a Western-style approach to peacebuilding, but rather, China can contribute to the debate in re-defining peacebuilding bringing its philosophical values on conflict prevention and a strong government as well as using its undoubted economic and diplomatic leverage to promote more inclusive and sustainable political solutions that also have a strong economic development approach.

In order to understand some of the distinctions in approaches between the Western and the Chinese peacebuilding models, this final chapter is going to analyse some of these differences as well as the successes and challenges from the Chinese approach. Currently there are some opportunities for engagement with China, which will be described. The examples of some of the present cooperation initiatives between China and western countries will illustrate that Beijing's policies have completely evolved in the last decades and that China is now ready to become a proactive member of the international community.

Different approaches to Peacebuilding

China and Western countries have different understandings over what constitutes peacebuilding. These main differences between the Western and the Chinese model are summarised in the table below:

	Western Perspective	China's Perspective
Objective of peacebuilding	Liberal democratic System, Priority of Market Economy	Priority of Economic Development
Focus of Peacebuilding	Good Governance	Strong Government
Principles of Peacebuilding	Principle of democratic promotion and principle of necessary intervention	Principle of Aiding and Assistance orientation and principle of non-intervention
Strategic Culture of Peacebuilding	Pre-emptive	Reactive response
Peacebuilding Methodology	Interaction between up and down: establishment/amendment of constitution, holding general elections, establishing multi- party systems, strengthening civil society	Top-down approach: improve the administrative functions of the national organisations of the country concerned; enhance the capacity building of the country concerned. Promote economic recovery
Challenges	Challenge local ownership Prescriptive solutions based on the liberal model	Lack of public participation Not context specific - economic development does not always address the root causes of the conflict

Western countries adhere to the 'liberal peace' agenda which, as examined in chapter two of this research, is a simultaneous pursuit of economic and political reform placed alongside measures to resolve the conflict and where peace is ensured by liberal democracy and a market economy. Therefore, the objective of Western countries' involvement in peace building is to achieve liberal democracy and to promote democratic systems. In post-conflict settings, this involves promoting measures such as the amendment of the constitution, holding a general election, establishing a multi-party system, fostering the opposition party and developing civil society. As also discussed in chapter two, the last decade has seen a move towards a more indigenous form of peacebuilding that is more driven by the local community (instead of imposed by the outside) but which is still rooted in liberal values.

By contrast, China maintains that liberal democracy is not a panacea, and that a one-size-fits-all model will not work. China believes every country has its own priorities and to promote

democratic system immediately after the end of conflicts is not necessarily a must choice (Lei, 2011). Furthermore, China believes that the UN should refrain from imposing any pre-determined model of governance. Instead, as examined in chapter three, China believes that measures such as reducing poverty and resolving unemployment are usually the most important tasks to be promoted in the aftermath of a conflict. According to Chinese thinking, security and development are intrinsically linked, and peacebuilding would be impossible without achievement on the development front. Some Chinese scholars also believe that poverty itself should be treated as a non-derogatory core human right, and that no country should use any excuse, including that of promoting democracy or eradicating corruption, to derail efforts aimed at fighting poverty (Weiwei, 2012). The Chinese approach also takes a heavily state-centric view, namely that the focus of the peacebuilding work should be on enhancing the concerned country's capacity building instead of weakening its leadership. This implies direct government-to-government support to strengthen the state. Such an approach, emphasising economic growth and a strong state, is shared with some Western states. However, China and Western states have divergent views on the need for political reforms which have led to tensions between China and other members of the international community, particularly where state actors in the conflict-affected countries in question are themselves parties to the conflict, and/or deploy heavy-handed methods of political control (Saferworld, 2012).

China also has a different perspective on the links between peacekeeping and peacebuilding missions. For Western academics, while peacekeeping aims to realise 'negative' peace, meaning no armed conflicts between or within countries, peacebuilding is about creating or restoring stable political, economic and social conditions for long-lasting peace (that is, 'positive' peace). As a traditionally wary country, China recognises that peacebuilding is even more complex than peacekeeping. China is not in favour of peacebuilding merged with military action, humanitarian intervention or regime change, and strongly opposes any operation of state-building as it sees it as a violation of the principles of respect of state sovereignty. Therefore, China takes a firm stance on the possibility of a 'Western right' to intervene in the name of peacebuilding, and tries to limit any possible Western interventions, for instance, by using its veto power in the UN security council. According to Lei, this demonstrates the subtle but significant shift of Chinese strategic culture from passively satisfying international norms to actively shaping them (Lei, 2011)

Typology of Chinese Interventions

The different studies and examples used throughout this research demonstrate that China's typology of intervention is heavily influence by the interests at stake. It is safe to assume that the bigger and more influential interests at risks, the more robust is the intervention. Based on the case studies used throughout this research, the table below summarises the types of interventions and some of the interests and triggers that led to the decision on the intervention.

Type of Intervention	Examples	Interests and Triggers
Non-interference / Non-intervention	China abstaining on UN Security council resolutions that advocated for intervention (i.e. Libya)	Perceive as a neutral power
Soft power	Academic Cooperation in Central Asia, Confucian Institutes in several countries, proactive multilateralism (i.e. SCO)	Strategic positioning, reputational/image
Foreign Aid	Mozambique, Algeria, Sudan and South Sudan	Economic interests and cooperation
Peaceful Coexistence	North Korea	Border Stability
Creative involvement	Mediator between Sudan and South Sudan to protect oil investments. Shuttle diplomacy between India and Pakistan.	Economic interest, stability to protect investments
Firm intervention	Kokang and Kachin ceasefires	Economic interests, border stability, nationalistic pressure, geo-rivalry with the US

From this sample of case studies, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. China uses non-interference interventions and soft power as a way to project an image of a peaceful nation and a peaceful rise. It is more of a proactive policy of changing the world's perception around China's image and strategically positioning China as an alternative to Western powers.

2. All the other types of intervention (foreign aid, peaceful co-existence, creative involvement and firm interventions) require consent from all parties involved. China only intervenes if they are requested to and only after the consent by all parties has been agreed.
3. The bigger the interests, the firmer and bolder is the intervention. Considerable Chinese interests at stake (for instance, economic interests and protection of Chinese investments, nationalistic pressure around security of Chinese personnel or attacks on Chinese investments and citizens or geo-rivalry with the US) are likely to lead to a stronger intervention. For instance, becoming the mediator between Sudan and South Sudan or between India and Pakistan.
4. Border stability plays a key role in defining the type of intervention. From the case studies analysed in this research we can conclude that China is likely to intervene more robustly in any conflict around its periphery. This was demonstrated in the Kachin and Kokang case studies in Myanmar were China actively intervened to stop hostilities. In Central Asia, although China is playing a more low-key role allowing Russia to continue to be the hegemon power in the region, it is likely that it will intervene more strongly if further instability and conflict happen in the region. Similarly, China plays a key role with North Korea, as it is the only country that can influence the North Korean government. If the situation in North Korea deteriorates to the point where refugees could start crossing Chinese borders it is likely that China will use its influence to halt atrocities.
5. None of the interventions use military means or threats. They all rely on economic incentives, mediation and diplomacy.

However, due to limited case studies, this model is not robust enough to provide evidence for a consistent Chinese approach for intervention in conflict areas, this model is just an early analysis. Future research should focus on further analysis on the triggers that lead to a firmer intervention of China and comparative analysis between intervention around border areas with China (North Korea, Central Asia, Myanmar etc.) and other conflicts elsewhere. From this initial analysis it is safe to assume that stronger interventions will happen in border areas but further analysis should be conducted on the different triggers and interests that lead to more robust interventions both in border areas as well as in other locations in order to establish a pattern. Further research should also concentrate on the type of interventions that China uses. China's role and positioning in the world order keeps evolving and adapting.

Future research should also examine whether China continues using diplomacy, economic incentives and mediation as the main means to conflict resolution or if it shifts towards stronger actions (such as military threats or interventions). This will help define a stronger typology of interventions that could help recognise when and how China could intervene in a conflict. Key case studies such as the potential role of China mediating in the Afghanistan conflict will also need to be examined as, if successful, they could promote China's role as a peacebuilding actor.

The role that China could play in the future, as an alternative power to the West bringing an alternative model of coexistence and peacebuilding, will largely be determined by the success of their peacebuilding model. The next section will examine some of the challenges and successes of the current Chinese approach to peacebuilding.

Successes and challenges of the Chinese approach

While China shares with the West some peacebuilding principles and belief in the benefits of strong state-building and economic development for post-conflict states, Chinese officials remain deeply sceptical towards peacebuilding agendas that include democratisation and imposition of elections as part of a peace process. However, the two approaches agree on the fundamental principles of economic development, strong state and conflict prevention as fundamental parts of any peacebuilding process. As these three areas are focus domains that China could bring to the peacebuilding debate, the following section is going to examine them, looking at some of the successes and challenges of their implementation so far.

Economic Development and Peacebuilding

China's focus on economic development as part of its peacebuilding approach could contribute to the debate around the re-definition of peacebuilding. Although the Western approach to peacebuilding also takes into account economic development as a key feature for peacebuilding, it is less prominent than in the Chinese approach. Conflict, violence and peace both shape and are shaped by the economy. Underdevelopment, unequal access to resources and poverty are causes of conflict and are drivers of violence. Absence of livelihoods and social economic deprivation, particular when coupled with a sense of historical marginalisation animate grievances in populations. The need and desire for access to and control over resources has always been a cause of conflict, especially when resources are

or are perceived to be scarce, or where the rules and norms of access and control are poorly institutionalised. But when well-managed, natural resources can be a source of economic progress, wealth and stability for a country. When mismanaged or misappropriated, they can have severely negative economic, social and environmental effects and constitute a massive loss for peacebuilding and development. A prominent UN study has suggested that since 1990 there have been at least 18 violent conflicts strongly fuelled by natural resources exploitation and that natural resources related conflicts experience an earlier and higher probability of relapse than others (Jolliffe, 2014a). Therefore, progress in economic development is critical to prevent relapses into conflict and to achieve durable solutions and sustainable peacebuilding. According to Saferworld boosting employment and promoting economic development in post-conflict states has significant dividends for maintaining peace, creating occupations for young, unemployed men who have little other experience beyond war (Saferworld, 2011). Supporting economic development after a conflict has provided positive results in the past. For instance, the Marshall Plan was a successful example of using economic means to speed up the process of post-conflict reconstruction, which had far-reaching consequences for Europe, both East and West. The aim of the Marshall Plan was to actively revive the German economy as quickly as possible in order to provide the means of survival for the refugees and the homeless. This was further strengthen by currency and fiscal reforms of the first post-war German government, which is regarded by many as the reason why Germany's economy recovery was faster than any other European country's despite receiving less aid per capita under the Marshall plan than its European neighbours (Ashdown, 2007). Economic development can also support and ensure sustainability ceasefire or any type of peace agreements. For instance, in the context of the ceasefires in Kachin, almost 20 years since return and resettlement was attempted, the majority of the population remain displaced, or have become so for a second time. The fragility of ceasefires, and their inability to ensure displaced populations' protection in the long term, appear to be the main factors hindering a durable solution (Jolliffe, 2014a). Smart economic policy will be crucial to future reintegration efforts and could be supported by international agencies. Effective reintegration programmes should include robust economic policies and ensure local ownership and participation of all stakeholders in order to ensure sustainability. Also, making progress on the economy is probably the best exit strategy for an international peacebuilding or statebuilding mission in a post-conflict setting.

Challenges with Economic Development

While China has the potential to contribute to post-conflict economic development, there are equally serious questions surrounding an approach that is purely economic. There is no doubt that in some conflict-affected states China is an important source of economic support for post-conflict reconstruction. However, any intervention by an external actor will affect the distribution of power and resources in that context. Depending upon how and to whom it is delivered, development assistance can increase inequalities and divisions between communities, at local and national levels. The risk is that over time the flow of Chinese (or other country's) resources into conflict-affected states may fuel existing inequalities and exclusion, thus strengthening drivers of conflict. Therefore, economic development can have negative impacts on peacebuilding processes, as economic activity is not neutral which can be unfavourable for peace. An economy that excludes certain identity groups can create frustration and grievances. For instance, wealth generated from primary exports is easily captured by narrow groups who enrich themselves; this can be linked to corruption, which also fuels grievances (International Alert, 2015). Also not all the countries have favourable settings for economic development as in many countries large-scale investment into indigenous resources may be the answer, but many post-conflict countries do not have the wealth or the natural resources that can immediately attract large-scale investment.

As seen in the case studies, despite some of the achievements in terms of economic progress seen in the examples of Tibet and Xinjiang, economic development on its own may not resolve unrest or address the root causes of the conflict as the source of grievances is not only related to economic power. More understanding on the causes of the conflict as well as a better context-sensitive approach are needed for China to have a more successful peacebuilding policy. The Kachin and Xinjiang case studies also illustrated that if the nature of the investment and infrastructure projects is purely extractive and there are limited benefits for the local communities and population, frustration and resentment against China and Chinese investments could be exacerbated. China should acknowledge that economic development on its own is not sufficient to build inclusive and sustainable peace; and that economic co-operation and other forms of assistance can exacerbate conflict dynamics. Therefore, economic development in conflict-affected countries must take into account the local context in order for it to be designed to strengthen sustainable peace.

Promoting a strong and developmental State

The Chinese approach to peacebuilding advocates for a strong government and institutions. China promotes strong and stable regimes by providing top-down support to strengthen state capacity. But the developmental state that the 'Asian Tigers' have set up has demonstrated a successful but different kind of political governance to that of the Western model. Their economic approach does not follow neoliberalism policies or the Washington consensus policies on trade liberalisation that were promoted by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. In some Asian countries including China the main characteristic of this developmental state is that its popular legitimacy rests in significant part on the ability of the state to deliver continued economic growth and not on holding leaders accountable through a democratic process. This characteristic gives little space for civil society and grassroots initiatives which are the cornerstone of Western Peacebuilding interventions. For western academics a strong civil society should be a main feature of a strong state. For instance, Ashdown argues that efficient democratic institutions and a civil society strong enough to protect these from the abuse of power and from the actions of an over-mighty executive are the necessary elements of a well-functioning state, especially after a conflict. Using a more top-down peacebuilding approach like the one the Chinese approach advocates for, can potentially create major risks, especially when state actors are themselves conflict actors and heavy-handed top down impositions of security make matters worse. But trying to impose a civil society from the outside can also have negative repercussions. After the intervention in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ashdown declared that the international community cannot create that civil society and that the only people who can do that are the members of the society itself (Ashdown, 2007). But it seems that China's view on civil society might be evolving as well. Lei believes that the role of civil society in peacebuilding has gained wide recognition in China, and the emergence of civil society in China (with 431,000 civil society organisations at the end of 2009) has created new opportunities for citizen participation in peacebuilding (Lei, 2011). The creation and proliferation of NGOs in China represents a significant opening of Chinese society, an opening that would have been inconceivable in the time of Mao Zedong and even Den Xiaoping. The growth of civil society in China and the pressure that they can bring to the government could potentially lead to a more dynamic and sustainable peacebuilding policy that also supports the development of civil societies as a characteristic of the state.

Conflict prevention as opposed to military intervention

China advocates for diplomatic options and conflict prevention measure such as dialogue, diplomatic mediation and economic assistance instead of an intervention by force or economic sanctions. This approach has been welcomed by most of the Asian countries who share similar principles and values and China has applied the approach to its border disputes which has proved to be an effective way of demonstrating the sincerity of these principles. However, conflict prevention remains a relatively undeveloped area of foreign policy within China (Saferworld). There appears to be limited discussion of how China's economic role overseas, alongside other tools such as diplomacy and mediation, can be proactively leveraged to prevent conflicts before they reach a crisis stage. As China engages with more conflict affected countries, it encounters a range of new risks and challenges, particularly with regards to its financial investments, its reputation in the country as well as on the world stage, and the safety of Chinese citizens, as demonstrated in the examples of Myanmar, South Sudan and Sudan.

These three areas of economic development, strong development state and conflict prevention have demonstrated that although there are differences in the approaches between the Western and the Chinese model, the goals and aims are similar. The Chinese approach is also evolving so there could be more room for cooperation in some of the more contentious issues such as promoting civil society. However, this provides the opportunity for greater policy engagement in conflict prevention issues and the next section will examine some of the opportunities that China has for engagement moving forward.

Looking forward: Opportunities for Peacebuilding

The next decades will see more pressures on states and societies such as demographic trends (population growth, increasing urbanisation), economic trends (more inequality and unemployment) or climate change (more natural disasters and climatic fluctuations). These pressures will likely increase the risk of conflict and new forms of conflict dynamics such as newer terrorist methods, more chronic violence or new threats. As seen with the recent European migrant crisis, these conflicts will no longer be contained in a single country and the risks of multiple countries being affected by conflict or regional conflicts is much higher. In order to face these challenges, peacebuilding and prevention capacities need to be developed further and rendered more effective. Given this context, extra support from China for

peacebuilding initiatives will potentially be very valuable in addressing some of these global challenges. These differences between the western and the Chinese approach earlier examined may become obstacles to co-operation. However, there is a need for more discussion on what peacebuilding should constitute in order to find areas where international actors can co-operate more closely or, at the very least, identify areas where Western states and China may be able to make complementary contributions. Some of these opportunities for engagement with China (and other rising powers) include the review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture and cooperation in foreign aid.

Review of the UN peacebuilding Architecture

The ten-year review of the Peacebuilding Architecture and the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations are opportunities to strengthen peacebuilding practice inside and outside the UN. The review of the UN peacebuilding architecture offers an international platform in which rising powers can participate to ensure a more inclusive, less western dominated process. The challenges that the review should address and that are highlighted in the White Paper on Peacebuilding from the Peacebuilding Platform include issues that China agrees and supports. For instance, the paper highlights the current challenges with peacebuilding: the absence of a shared perception of what constitutes ‘peacebuilding practice’; peacebuilding directed by external interveners is no longer a politically and practically viable approach; many peacebuilding professionals observe a reduction of operational space to build peace and that there has been a shift towards a securitisation of peace and development work (White Paper on Peacebuilding, 2015). Moreover, the review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture in 2015 emphasises conflict prevention which is one of the characteristics of the Chinese peacebuilding approach. The Report of the Advisory Group of Experts for the 2015 Review of the United Nations Peacebuilding Architecture stated that:

> ‘Sustaining peace should be understood as encompassing not only efforts to prevent relapse into conflict but also to prevent lapse into conflict in the first place. When considering the peace and security activities of the United Nations, therefore, a strong emphasis must be place on conflict prevention’ (United Nations, 2015)

Because China could contribute towards this debate, Beijing should be part of any review of the UN peacebuilding architecture in the future in order to foster cooperation and to promote a more global approach. Recent examples prove that China is willing to cooperate with Western countries on issues that are related to and are in accordance with its peacebuilding approach. For instance, there have been some recent examples of cooperation to promote conflict prevention. China has engaged in Saferworld's Conflict Prevention working group, a project with the United Kingdom government which aims to improve constructive dialogue between the Chinese and the UK policy communities on issues related to conflict prevention, and to increase knowledge of the two countries' respective efforts towards conflict prevention in conflict-affected and fragile states (http://www.saferworld.org.uk/where/conflict-prevention-working-group).

Collaboration in Foreign Aid

Peacebuilding strategies need to reflect the changes in donor and aid context as traditional western donors no longer have their previous influence over development assistance. Western countries are beginning to have less leverage over recipient governments and the threat of diplomatic isolation by the West now carries less weight. The assumption that Western donors can guide conflict-affected states towards peace through a combination of aid and conditionality becomes more questionable which has implications for the Western principle of linking aid to government performance on issues like governance, peacebuilding or human rights. At the same time, China's understanding of its economic aid as 'neutral' in conflict affected countries is problematic as aid always has an impact on internal politics and power relations.

As China emerges as a major player in the field of foreign aid, some of the traditional Western donors have begun to seize the opportunity to engage China in development cooperation in an effort to form new joint-venture programs and facilitate mutual understanding. Western states and non-state actors seeking to promote an international peacebuilding agenda should engage with the Chinese peacebuilding community to make the case that conflict-sensitivity investment and mutual collaboration is in China's own interests. As China increases its engagement in fragile contexts, it will need to develop new policies to shape this involvement and could learn from other countries. Such cooperation and linking of resources could play a significant role in improving aid quality and effectiveness throughout

the developing world. It could also help both China and established Western donors learn from each other in the rapidly evolving aid landscape. There have already been some instances of cooperation between China and western countries. For instance, in July 2013, China Agricultural University and the UK Department for International Development, with the endorsement of the Chinese Ministry of Commerce, launched a project aimed at strengthening research capacity in China on international development cooperation. Also in 2013, a Memorandum of Understanding on Development Cooperation Partnership was signed between Australia and China to strengthen cooperation and collaboration between the two countries in the delivery of aid in the Asian Pacific (Taidong, 2013). These two initiatives represent recent and positive developments in aid collaboration between established Western donors and China. As the world evolves and with the rise of new powers, new multilateral frameworks for development should be formulated on the basis of dialogue between states, including China and other rising powers in order for them to be more impactful and effective. Also, by offering alternative sources of support to that of the traditional Western donors, China and other new actors are introducing more competition into the 'donor market-place'. According to Richmond and Tellidis, China is not attempting to overturn or replace the established rules and norms; rather, it is weakening the position of western donors in respect of aid-receiving countries, exposing standards and processes that are out of date and ineffectual (Richmond and Tellidis, 2014). For these reasons, China is already acting as an alternative model to the West which is in turn forcing western countries to review some of their principles and approaches in conflict-affected countries. This means that national governments in conflict-affected states have more choice regarding from whom they receive assistance, and more options regarding the terms of such support.

Can China become a key actor in supporting peace and stability?

One of the main challenges which China faces in order to become a key peacebuilding actor is on human rights. China is achieving political and territorial cohesion with a one-party state regime which is more repressive at home and more open to the outside world. As the examples of Xinjiang and Tibet have illustrated, ethnic discrimination and religious repression justified by the government in the name of the 'fight against separatism, religious extremism, and terrorism' continue to fuel rising tensions in both provinces. But while there is reason for the government's concern with widespread violence in these provinces, discriminatory and repressive minority policies only exacerbate the problem and do not solve the root causes of the conflict. These policies also intensify the portray of China as an authoritarian and

repressive regime at the international level. This perception limits the legitimacy of Chinese interventions in other countries as they tend to be seen as suspicious by governments and international civil society groups.

Human rights do not single China out as a key peacebuilding actor but rather, they reflect the limitation and challenges that China faces at the international level. However, a shared concern in the West and China (and other rising powers) over stability in conflict-affected states provides a foundation for dialogue about peacebuilding. Therefore, as this research has argued, there is a need to further engage or develop new forums and mechanisms for constructive policy engagement and dialogue with new rising powers. This will represent an opportunity to engage with these new actors based on shared interests in, and concern to promote, peace and stability.

As the fastest rising power, China has a growing influence and leverage in selected countries and contexts, even if its presence is primarily commercially-driven to serve domestic economic growth, and focused at the level of the state, in line with Beijing's own approach to development and stability. China is starting to export its own norms and principles on peacebuilding and foreign aid. While certain policies are consistent with well-established norms and initiatives, the country's foreign policy uses its status as the leader of developing countries in order to influence the debate towards a non-Western approach. But as seen in some of the examples, China's interventions carry political implications, impacting the conflict and security dynamics in the countries with which it engages. China needs to be more aware of the context in which it operates as well as to have a better understanding of the conflict dynamics and root causes of the conflict, not only internationally, but also in dealing with its domestic conflict at home as illustrated by the case study in Xinjiang. As China becomes more integrated into the global order and assumes the responsibilities that come with this involvement, Beijing needs to re-evaluate and adapt its foreign policy principles and approach if it really wants to support peace and stability.

It is in China's interests to maintain national stability and peace with other countries as it supports its domestic economic growth and the stability within its own boundaries. China's foreign policies and principles have evolved over the last decades and recent examples demonstrate that Beijing is looking to cooperate with international institutions and/or other countries on conflict resolution mechanisms and approaches. In the changing world order,

the international community badly needs China to play a more active role, to increase its input in all fields of global governance and conflict resolution, and to make a contribution commensurate with its current strength and influence. Currently there is a real opportunity to develop more complementary approaches between China and the West. Western actors must seek to better understand China's interests, the nature of its engagement and opportunities for influence. Proactive and constructive engagement by the West on these issues can help shape how China engages in conflict-affected states in the future. Ultimately, not to recognise the impacts of China's engagement undermines peacebuilding and conflict resolution, and the world will benefit if established and emerging donors can find common and cooperative approaches to peacebuilding and foreign aid that enhance effectiveness and attack global poverty and conflicts with combined resources.

Annex 1: List of people interviewed in Myanmar

In Yangon

Non-structured interviews conducted over several trips to Myanmar between 2013 and 2014

1. Conflict Adviser, Department for International Development (DFID), British Embassy
2. Government Liaison Officer, British Embassy Yangon
3. Deputy Representative, UNICEF Myanmar
4. Director, Listening Program, CDA Collaborative Learning Project
5. Associate Director Do No Harm Programme, CDA
6. Project Manager, Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, Myanmar office
7. Senior Advisor on Peacebuilding and Peace Processes, DAI, US Embassy
8. Country Director in Myanmar, Search for Common Grounds
9. Associate Program Director, Myanmar Peace Centre
10. Peacebuilding Programme Manager, ACTED Myanmar
11. Head of Field Coordination Unit, UNOCHA, Yangon
12. Executive Director (Myanmar), The Border Consortium
13. Deputy Country Representative, Office of Transition Initiatives, USAID
14. Country Director for Myanmar, Non-violent Peace-force,
15. Consultant, International Crisis Group
16. Attaché, Programme Officer (Peacebuilding) Delegation of the European Union to Myanmar
17. Programme Manager, Drugs & Democracy Programme, Transnational Institute, Myanmar Office
18. Executive Director, Euro-Burma Office in Myanmar
19. Health Coordinator, International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)
20. Executive Director, Swe Tha Har Social Services (Myanmar national NGO)
21. Programme Advisor, Swe Tha Har Social Services (Myanmar national NGO)
22. Senior government relations director, Save the Children International, Yangon
23. Country Director, Danish Refugee Council
24. Programme Director for Myanmar, Mercy Corps

In Muse, Northern Shan State

Non-structured interviews conducted between 4 and 11 March 2014

1. Programme Director, Wunpawng Ninghtoi (WPN) – Local Kachin organisation
2. Programme Manager, Health Poverty Action, Kachin office
3. Health programme manager, MERLIN, Northern Shan office
4. Security Manager, Save the Children International, Northern Shan Office
5. Programme manager, Save the Children International, Northern Shan Office

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